

Weekender suspended

THE JORDAN TIMES' staff regrets to inform its readers that the Weekender section has been suspended pending plans for the paper's redesign. Nevertheless, "Society on the move" and "Chip Talk" will continue to appear on Thursdays, starting today, on page 7. The Jordan Times staff extends appreciation and gratitude for the understanding of its readers and contributors.

Jordan Times

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Israeli-allied militiaman killed in Hizbollah attack

MARIJAYOUN (AFP) — A militiaman in the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) was killed Wednesday in a Hizbollah rocket attack on a position in the self-declared Israeli-occupied border zone in south Lebanon, SLA radio said. The militiaman died from wounds received from rockets fired at an SLA post in Alitarun, near Israel's border with Lebanon and inside Israel's self-declared "security zone" in south Lebanon, the Voice of the South said. Hizbollah claimed responsibility for the attack.

Algeria denies Saudi mediation in its conflict

ALGIERS (AFP) — The Algerian government on Wednesday denied that Saudi Arabia was leading secret mediation efforts between it and Muslim rebels. Such claims "lack any foundation," a foreign ministry spokesman said, adding that Algeria "rejects categorically any interference in its domestic affairs." Diplomats in the Gulf said Tuesday that Saudi efforts had led to the Sept. 21 announcement by the Islamic Salvation Army, the armed wing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), of a ceasefire from Oct. 1.

Pope prays for end to slaughter in Algeria

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II Wednesday prayed for an end to what he called the "ferocious chain of violence" in Algeria. Speaking in St. Peter's Square during his regular audience, the Pope recalled the "martyred population" of the North African country, where more than 80 people were killed Saturday in the violence. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. But suspicion immediately fell on Islamic militants. Some 60,000 people have been killed in their 5 1/2-year insurgency. "We ask the Lord that the will and ways be found to break the ferocious chain of violence and heal the innumerable and deep wounds" in Algeria, Pope said.

Primakov confirms planned tour to Syria, Israel, Egypt and Gaza

OTTAWA (AFP) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov confirmed Tuesday that he would be visiting the Middle East in the next few days. Although he did not confirm the dates of his trip, he said arrangements had been made for him to visit Syria, Egypt, Israel and Gaza. Talking to journalists after a meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, Mr. Primakov said he had met representatives of the governments concerned while in New York last week for the United Nations General Assembly.

King hopes Yassin's release is 'one step amongst many'

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday expressed his satisfaction over Israel's release of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and called for more similar steps to restore confidence between Israel and the Palestinians.

"I am very pleased and happy with the swift reaction [and for] the fact that Sheikh Ahmad Yassin arrived safely here," the King said following the arrival of the sheikh at King Hussein Medical Centre.

"Now he is resting and he receives the best care we can afford him. This is the least we can do and I am happy to meet him for the first time," the King told Jordan Television before dawn on Wednesday.

"He is in good spirit and I hope this will be one step amongst many to follow as I have appealed before for concrete, humanitarian and other steps to be taken to save the peace process and to get it re-emergent towards its goal of comprehensive peace in this region," the King said.

He added that he spoke with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and informed him about the arrival of the Hamas leader to the Kingdom following eight years in Israeli jails.

"I did speak to President Arafat immediately and gave him the good news and he is very happy," the King said.

An Israeli army communiqué, issued at 4 a.m. Wednesday, said Sheikh Ahmad Yassin was pardoned because of ill health and taken by helicopter to Amman following a request by King Hussein.

"His release was declared at the recommendation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who answered the call of King Hussein," the statement said.

The release of Sheikh Yassin came hours only after the King made a request to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on Tuesday.

Speaking to his family, reporters and supporters in Gaza by phone from Amman, Sheikh Yassin said: "We salute you and all the Palestinian people in the occupied land and, God willing we will meet soon on our soil."

"I send my greetings to the entire Palestinian people. I want to inform them that I am coming to Gaza in the near future. I am getting treatment in Jordan," the 61-year-old Hamas leader said from Amman.

Palestinian leader Arafat welcomed Sheikh Yassin's release. "God willing, it will be the beginning of the release of all prisoners who are still in Israeli and Zionist prisons, who are

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
جلالة الملك الاردني الامير محمد الحسين بن طلال
صلى الله عليه وسلم
الحمد لله الذي افاض علينا بهذه النعمة العظيمة
التي هي اطلاق سراح الشيخ احمد ياسين
القيادي البارز في الجبهة الشعبية لتحرير فلسطين
والزعيم الروحي للحركة الاسلامية في فلسطين
والقدس الشريف
والشيخ ياسين قدومه الى عمان
والسلامة التي احاطت به
والتي هي ثمرة لقرار ملكي
مبارك في اطلاق سراحه
والتي هي ثمرة لقرار ملكي
مبارك في اطلاق سراحه
والتي هي ثمرة لقرار ملكي
مبارك في اطلاق سراحه

The handwritten letter sent to His Majesty King Hussein by an Israeli officer declaring the release of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin upon the request of the King and stressing that Sheikh Yassin was not deported, but released free. The letter is written in broken Arabic with many grammatical mistakes suggesting the author is not a native speaker. The letter is also headed with "By the name of God, the merciful, the Islamic prelude and carried no eligible signature (J.T. copy)

still suffering there," Mr. Arafat said.

A Hamas statement said that Sheikh Yassin arrived here for treatment upon an invitation from the King.

The statement said that Sheikh Yassin declined to board the military helicopter sent by the King until he received a "written undertaking from the occupation authorities that would allow him to return to the Gaza Strip."

The one-page document, signed by the commander of the Israeli army's southern region confirmed "that Sheikh Yassin's release was not a deportation and this is a pledge that Israel undertakes."

Sheikh Yassin's release came one week after Hamas alleged that Israeli intelligence agents attempted to assassinate the Hamas politburo chief Khaled Misha'al in Amman. Two Canadian suspects were arrested after a quarrel with Mr. Misha'al's bodyguards.

Israel Radio on Wednesday said the release was part of a deal between Jordan and Israel for the swap of the two suspected agents of Israel's Mossad secret service.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon and Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh closed the deal with Jordan earlier this week. Reuters news agency quoted the radio as saying.

State Minister for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi denied that Sheikh Yassin's release was part of a deal with Israel in exchange for the two suspects.

Monday to restart in October formal talks blocked for six months over Jewish settlement building and Islamist bombings.

"This American attempt is a [sign of] conviction by the U.S. administration that Israel is trying to escape from what is signed," President Arafat told reporters after his talks with President Mubarak. He had arrived in Egypt from Morocco.

"These include the release of [Palestinian] prisoners, redeployment, its plot to judaize Jerusalem, land expropriation, creation of settlements, its refusal to open Gaza airport, its refusal to

including breaking off diplomatic relations," the source added.

In addition, the King had asked Mr. Netanyahu to make a gesture to Hamas to "repair the damage" done by the assassination bid against Mr. Misha'al. AFP quoted the sources as saying.

In exchange for the antidote for the poison used against Mr. Misha'al and the release of Sheikh Yassin, Jordan agreed "to make as little noise as possible about the whole affair and to resolve it discreetly," the sources added.

Hamas spokesman in Amman Mohammad Nazal denied that his group was part of any deal to release Sheikh Yassin.

"Well, they told us today that Sheikh Ahmad Yassin had arrived at King Hussein Medical Centre. We do not know about any deal between the Israeli government and the Jordanian government," Mr. Nazal told the Jordan Times.

"We are not part of any deal to release Sheikh Yassin," Mr. Nazal told the Jordan Times.

"No change in the policy of Hamas. We have policies decided by our establishment. So, there will be no changes in the policies of Hamas," he added.

The General-Secretary of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Ahmad Abdul Rahman said that the PNA "demands the cancellation of the expulsion of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and his return to his homeland."

The White House spokesman Michael McCurry welcomed the release saying that the act was a "humanitarian gesture taken by the government of Israel that we hope will improve the climate for further discussions related to the peace process."

Meanwhile, Iran said that it was unimpressed by the release saying it was meant to abort a Palestinian uprising in case of his death in prison.

Israel Radio said security officials had long recommended the sheikh's release for fear his death in prison would prompt revenge attacks and disturbance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Hamas leader, who was born in 1936 in the Gaza Strip, formed Hamas in 1987.

He was arrested by Israeli authorities several times and detained for possession of arms and masterminding attacks against Israeli targets.

The Hamas leader is completely paralysed and suffers blindness in the right eye as a result of torture in Israeli jails.

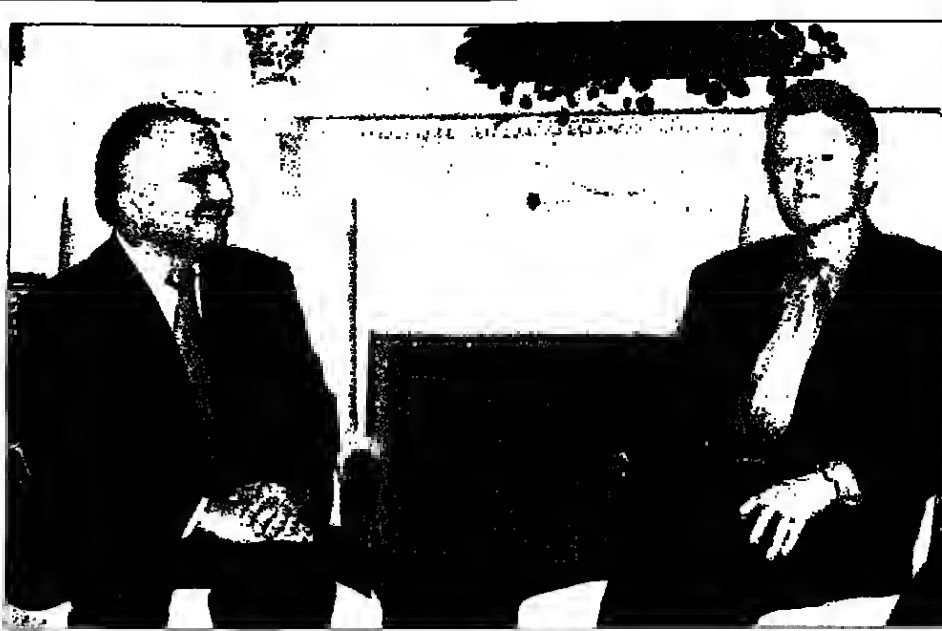
He also suffers weakness of sight in the left eye. In addition, he lost hearing in the right ear and sustains weak hearing in the left ear.

when Israel broke ground on a controversial 6,500-unit Jewish settlement on the hill-top of Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab east Jerusalem.

The crisis deepened after two Jerusalem bombings by Islamists which have claimed 20 Israeli lives since July.

"Israel's defiance is not just towards the Palestinian side. The [peace] agreement is an international one and the defiance is directed at all the countries and powers that signed it," said the Palestinian President.

"What is happening is dangerous and affects the peace process in its entirety as well as the Middle East," he said.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan meets U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House Wednesday. The Crown Prince and the president discussed progress made in talks between the Palestinians and Israelis and ways to build on such progress (Reuters photo)

Prince Hassan, Clinton discuss ways to build on progress in peace process

Special from Washington

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday conveyed a message from His Majesty King Hussein to U.S. President Bill Clinton dealing with efforts to overcome obstacles facing the Middle East peace process and creating the appropriate environment for achieving the desired progress.

During their meeting at the White House, the Crown Prince and President Clinton also discussed future steps that will be taken to build on the progress achieved through the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli talks and the release of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin in response to a humanitarian call by King Hussein.

The meeting took place amidst a flurry of political activities in Washington aimed at ending the stalemate in the

peace talks. These activities include the visit of Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, renewed Syrian-American contacts and the talks Israeli President Ezer Weizman will hold here next week.

The meeting came as part of the necessary consultation and coordination between Jordan and the U.S. at this critical stage through which the peace process is passing in light of the important role the two countries play in creating a regional environment conducive for achieving a breakthrough in the peace negotiations.

Official Jordanian sources said.

The talks between the Crown Prince and the U.S. president also addressed bilateral relations and means of improving cooperation between the Kingdom and the U.S. at a time when Jordan enjoys the support and appreciation of both the Clinton

administration and Congress, the sources said.

Crown Prince Hassan and President Clinton also discussed the steps the U.S. is expected to announce shortly to increase economic and military assistance to Jordan, the sources added.

President Clinton stressed the important role Jordan is playing under the wise leadership of King Hussein in efforts to bring about peace and stability to the region, and reiterated the U.S. commitment to supporting the Kingdom.

The Crown Prince expressed Jordan's appreciation for this support.

Crown Prince Hassan also held talks with U.S. Under-Secretary of State Thomas Pickering and was scheduled to meet with U.S. special coordinator for the peace process Dennis Ross before leaving Washington for Amman before the weekend.

Japan to grant Jordan \$87m for infrastructure projects — envoy

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Japan is expected to grant Jordan approximately \$87 million for various projects within the coming two months, the Japanese ambassador to Jordan, Takayuki Kimura, said on Wednesday.

In a press conference, Mr. Kimura told reporters that four Japanese technical missions are due to arrive in Jordan during the coming two months to finalise the projects.

"If the discussion of the missions with the Jordanian counterparts satisfy both sides, I am sure they do, we expect the final signing of agreements can be made, one by one, within the next several months," Mr. Kimura said.

The ambassador, who also reviewed Japan's ongoing financial assistance to the Kingdom, said about \$5.6 million will be allocated for the provision of medical equipment for Jordan University Hospital with the aim of improving quality and capacity of the hospital's medical services and its functions.

Approximately \$65 million will be earmarked for the second

phase of a project geared towards improving the water supply system in Greater Amman, said Mr. Kimura. He added that the project is aimed at increasing pumping capacity of water from Deir Allah to Amman as well as expanding the Zai Treatment Plant in order to double the existing water supply of 45 million cubic metres per year.

Mr. Kimura noted that the first phase of the water supply project, also financed by Japan at a cost of \$12 million, is still under implementation.

Japan will also provide Jordan with civil defence/fire fighting equipment worth about \$7.5 million, according to the ambassador, who said the project strives to develop Jordan's civil defence (fire fighting and rescue operations).

Mr. Kimura added that Japan will allocate about \$9.3 million for the provision of therapeutic and diagnostic equipment and ambulances to upgrade Jordan's emergency health care.

Mr. Kimura said Japan's ongoing financial assistance to the Kingdom is in appreciation of the country's efforts in pushing the peace process forward.

"Jordan is a key country in the Middle East... and Jordan is a country that should be supported for taking bold steps in the peace process," said the ambassador.

Mr. Kimura pointed to other projects financed by Japan currently under implementation, including a \$7.2 million renovation of Sheikh Hussein Bridge, \$23 million in support of Jordan's balance of payments and a \$3.7 and \$2.2 million to increase food production in the Kingdom.

Other projects, Mr. Kimura said, are still to be launched. These include a vocational training centre at a cost of \$6.5 million, and a three-year project targeted towards family planning worth \$2.5 million.

The ambassador said Jordan and Japan are currently discussing the rescheduling of \$72 million of Jordanian debts to Tokyo.

Japan is also considering giving Jordan a loan of \$85 million for tourism projects, a grant of \$9.3 million for the renovation of the King Hussein Bridge, as well as additional support for the Kingdom's social productivity programme, Mr. Kimura said.

Iraq assails West's no-fly zones

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said on Wednesday two no-fly zones over its territory were illegal and called on Western powers imposing them to halt violations of its airspace.

The ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra said the zones, one in the north to protect rebel Kurds and the other in the south to guard dissident Shi'ite Muslims against air attacks by Baghdad, were not mandated by the 1991 Gulf war U.N. resolutions on Iraq.

imposed on it by force," the newspaper said in a front-page editorial.

"This arbitrary (air) exclusion does not represent international law...but it is rather a unilateral and arrogant decision practised by America and those cooperating with it," the paper said.

Iranian planes penetrated the two zones on Monday and bombed military camps run by Iranian exiles in Iraq.

Baghdad says the presence of the zones makes it difficult to defend itself against such attacks.

Both zones were imposed after the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait. U.S., British and French aircraft take

part in policing them.

Thawra said the U.S. persisted on the imposition of the zones "using fabricated excuses to weaken Iraq and restrict its movement in the face of matters threatening Iraq's territorial security and national unity."

Mujahedeen to uphold armed struggle

Meanwhile in Baghdad, Iran's main opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen targeted in the Iranian air strike, vowed at a congress on Wednesday to keep up the armed struggle against Tehran.

Mujahedeen leader Masoud Rajavi also condemned a natural gas deal

between the French oil giant Total and Iran.

"The armed struggle is the main method to overthrow the Iranian regime and set up a democratic regime," Mr. Rajavi said, citing a final statement of a 10-day congress of the Mujahedeen and smaller opposition groups.

Mr. Rajavi said Iran's air strikes on two Mujahedeen bases on Monday were "proof of the weakness and fear" of Tehran, which said the operation was launched in retaliation for deadly cross-border raids by the opposition.

He also called for a "political and economic boycott of Iran" and warned against "any weakness or

compromise with the mullahs' regime."

On the Total contract, Mr. Rajavi said it "encouraged Iran's ruling theocracy to continue its flagrant violation of human rights and to export terrorism and fundamentalism."

He urged the French government to step in and cancel the two-billion-dollar contract for Total to explore Iran's South Pars offshore gas field along with Russian and Malaysian partners.

The congress brought together more than 570 delegates from 20 countries, including Iran. It was held at a Mujahedeen centre in Iraq, the group said, without disclosing the location.



SHEIKH YASSIN'S GRANDSON: Sheikh Ahmed Yassin's grandson cries as he holds a picture of his grandfather during a protest staged at the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip early Wednesday calling on Israel to return Sheikh Yassin back to Gaza. Later in the day, Israel said Sheikh Yassin was free to return home any time he wanted, noting that the ailing Hamas founder was sent to Jordan for medical treatment (Reuters photo)

Kuwaiti public figures call for scrapping of Doha conference

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwaiti personalities have appealed in a letter to Qatar's emir to call off the Middle East economic conference in Doha or drop Israel from the invitation list, one of the signatories said Wednesday.

Abdul Wahab Al Wazzan, a prominent businessman, said eight figures from across the political spectrum sent a letter "appealing to the emir of Qatar (Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani) not to go ahead with such an economic conference."

"If they do, they should not invite Israel," Mr. Wazzan said, adding that the letter was sent two weeks ago through the Qatari embassy.

Qatar is to host the fourth Middle East and North Africa economic conference in November. Israel has attended each of the previous meetings.

Doha has stuck to its decision to hold the conference, despite pressure from several Arab states who want to see it cancelled

because of hardline Israeli policies which they blame for undermining the peace process.

Alongside Mr. Wazzan, other signatories are MPs Nasser Al Samia, Adnan Abdul Samad and Abdullah Naibari, newspaper columnist Abdullah Nafisi, former MP Jassem Al Sager, businessman Abdulhamad Al Mazidi and students' union head Yousef Omer.

Kuwait itself has not yet said whether it will take part in the conference.

PNA officers, gang engage in firefight

NABLUS (AP) — Palestinian security officers seeking to avenge the murder of a relative engaged in a 90-minute firefight with a vigilante gang in downtown Nablus, Palestinian police and witnesses said Wednesday.

No one was injured in Tuesday evening's shootout in the narrow alleys of the old city, or Casbah, of Nablus.

Those involved in the gun battle — eight officers and eight vigilantes — were detained, said Jibril Rajoub, the Palestinian security chief in the West Bank.

Colonel Rajoub said the preventive security service officers, all members of the Hassaneh clan, had tried to avenge the killing of a family member.

"They think it's a game and acted like gangsters, all of those who participated are under arrest," Col. Rajoub said.

The man targeted by the officers was Ahmad Tabouk, who is responsible for killing and maiming a number of Nablus residents.

Tabouk and his followers operated in the city in the months before Israel handed Nablus to Palestinian control in December 1995. Several days after the takeover, Tabouk was arrested by Palestinian police.

Tabouk is held in the West Bank town of Jericho by the Palestinian Preventive Security Service, but is allowed to make weekly visits to Nablus.

PNA declares state of alert in security units

From the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz

PALESTINIAN SECURITY forces have mounted heavy machine guns and other weapons on their security vehicles, apparently girding Palestinian National Authority (PNA) territory for a defence against invasion and taking Israel's defence establishment by surprise.

Meanwhile, Israeli security forces are heightening the state of alert in the big cities in light of continued warnings of possible terrorist attacks on the eve of the new year. Security has also been stepped up around the Jewish settlements in the territories. The territories will be sealed off from the arrival of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish new year), at sundown Wednesday, until the end of the holiday. Ha'aretz has learned that last week a state of alert was declared in Palestinian security units and emergency meetings were held to discuss scenarios under which Israeli forces might enter Area A of the West Bank, which is under

Palestinian control. Participants in the meetings said that the Israeli army must be prevented from entering Area A even at the cost of a full-scale clash. A meeting held 10 days ago resulted in the decision to heighten intelligence cooperation among all branches of the Palestinian security forces and to step up night patrols in an effort to prevent the possible entry of the IDF into Area A.

This week, Palestinian special forces held an exercise in the Gaza Strip based on the possibility that the Israeli army will enter the autonomous area in order to abduct a Palestinian leader. IDF sources told Ha'aretz that tension with the Palestinians had abated. However, the IDF noted that it has contingency plans should the situation deteriorate.

A security source has revealed that the Palestinian authority and various militant groups in the self-rule areas have more than 30,000 firearms, as well as grenades, explosives and even Katyushas.

Sharjah court adjourns appeal of jailed stewardess

SHARJAH (AFP) — An Australian air hostess and two Arabs convicted on drugs charges appeared in a United Arab Emirates (UAE) court here Wednesday to appeal against their jail terms.

Sharjah court held a brief hearing and adjourned until Oct. 11 because two witnesses were absent, a defence lawyer said. It was the third adjournment of the appeal since the convictions were handed down in June. Julia Alexander, 25, was smiling in court and appeared in good health. She has been jailed for four years for smoking hashish. Appearing along with the Emirates hostess was 19-year-old UAE national Jamal Al Ghaifur, whose mother is a U.S. citizen and who was jailed for life for dealing in valium, a prohibited substance in the Gulf state.

Interior ministry to enforce new wedding rules in UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has asked its interior ministry to help enforce a new law limiting wedding costs in a drive to curb mixed marriages, an official said Wednesday.

Jamal Al Bah, director of the Marriage Fund, said Emirati bridegrooms violating the new rules would be deprived of the grant of \$19,075 extended by the fund.

"The cabinet decision on marriage dowries will be enforced through coordination between the fund and the ministries of interior, and justice and Islamic affairs," he told Al Khaleej newspaper.

"We will watch wedding parties to ensure they do not last more than one day. We will also check marriage contracts to make sure the dowry

and the divorce compensation for wives do not exceed the limit."

The federal cabinet decided this week to set a ceiling on dowries, the money paid by a bridegroom to his bride under Islamic law, and on divorce compensation.

It also stipulated wedding parties must not exceed one day instead of the traditional three days and they should not be extravagant.

The dowry was set at a maximum \$5,450 and compensation for divorced wives at \$8,175.

The decision culminated a drive spearheaded by President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan to persuade parents to accept small dowries to encourage national men to marry compatriots and curb mixed marriages.

Court suspends implementation of public transport licensing regulations

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Supreme Court Monday suspended new licensing regulations for public transportation issued last month by the Ministry of Interior, after taxi owners filed a lawsuit against the minister of interior contending that the new regulations would cost them heavy financial losses.

Their attorney, Zuhair Abu Ragheb, said.

Mr. Abu Ragheb, who filed a law suit 22 days ago on behalf of the Taxi Owners Union who are demanding the cancellation of the new procedures, said the Supreme Court, headed by Judge Farouq Kilani, decided to halt the implementations of the new licensing regulations "until the court reviews the case."

"I am optimistic about Tuesday's Supreme

Court's decision, and I believe it is an indication that we will win the case, because it is a case of more than 100,000 citizens who will be harmed by the new regulations," Mr. Abu Ragheb said.

The new licensing procedures prohibit taxi owners from selling their cars as public vehicles, a regulation which enraged most taxi owners who claimed that this will depreciate the value of their vehicles, and prompted them to file a case against the Interior Minister Nahir Rashid.

Government officials have insisted that the new regulations will not affect the already operating taxis, "but rather it is a step to modernise the transportation industry in Jordan to meet the expected increase in number of tourists who will visit the region within the next three years."

Other regulations stipulate a requirement of JD 1 million capital for the establishment of an office in Amman with 75 cars operating. In other cities, the financial obligation and the number of operating vehicles is less.

The government has offered current taxi owners the alternative to merge with new taxi companies established with a JD1 million capital.

The officials said these new regulations will increase employment opportunities in Jordan and create competition with the public transportation sector in order to improve the transportation service as a whole.

Mr. Abu Ragheb told the Jordan Times that the Supreme Court will start reviewing the case, and "will issue a decision within the next three months."

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10...New Kids on the Block
14:30...My Little Fairy Tale
15:00...America's Funniest People
15:30...He Shoots He Scores
16:00...I Love Lucy
16:30...The Boy From Andromeda
17:00...French Programmes
17:00...News in French
19:15...French Programmes
19:30...News Headlines
19:35...Trivial Pursuit
20:00...Parenthood
20:30...Lois and Clark — Superman
21:10...Oprah Winfrey Show
22:00...News in English
22:30...Feature Film
23:59...End of TX.

PRAYER TIMES

04:08...Fajr
05:25...Sunrise (Doha)
11:25...Dhuhr
14:48...Asr
17:25...Maghreb
18:42...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweith, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures tend to rise slightly but remaining below average by about four degrees centigrade. Clouds will appear at different altitudes with winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 13/25

Aqaba 20/32
Deserts 11/27
Jordan Valley 21/33

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 22, Aqaba 29 Humidity readings: Amman 51 per cent, Aqaba 48 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Yabba Abdul Rahim...736072
Dr. Naser Ibrahim...830432
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi...893542
Dr. Bahjat Bader...833642
Firas pharmacy...661912
Ferdows pharmacy...778336
Al Asena pharmacy...637055
Nairokh pharmacy...623672
Yacoub pharmacy...644945
Shamsani pharmacy...637660
Najib pharmacy...847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh...250080
Al Quds pharmacy...1...
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan...995743
Khalifeh pharmacy...985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre...637111

Civil Defence Department...661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue...630341
Civil Defence Emergency...199
Rescue Police 192...621111,
637777

Fire Brigade...617101
Blood Bank...775121
Highway Police...843402
Traffic Police...896390
Public Security Department...630321

Hotel Complaints...605800
Price Complaints...661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints...897467

Amman Municipality Complaints...787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)...121
Overseas Calls...010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs...623101
Abdall Telephone Repairs...661101

Jordan Television...773111
Radio Jordan...774111
Water Authority...680100
Jordan Electricity Authority...815615

Electric Power Company...636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussien Medical Centre...813813/32
Khalidi Maternity...642816
Akhil Maternity...642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity...642362

Malhas, J. Amman...636140
Palestine, Shmeisani...607071
Shmeisani Hospital...669131
University Hospital...845945
Al-Munasher Hospital...667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali...664164/6
Italian, Al-Mohajreen...777101/3

Al-Bashir...775111/26
Army, Marka...891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital...602240/50

Amal Hospital...674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery...865199
ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital...661101
Zarqa National Hospital...60900560
Ibn Sina Hospital...09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital...09990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital...02755555
Greek Catholic Hospital...0272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital...02747100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital...03814111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00...Sunai (RJ)
08:45...New Delhi (RJ)
09:05...Bombay (RJ)
09:05...Dhahran Riyadh (RJ)
09:25...Beirut (RJ)
09:40...Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:00...Colombo (RJ)
14:15...Kuwait (RJ)
14:55...New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:05...Moscow (RJ)
16:30...London (RJ)
18:10...Athens (RJ)
18:20...Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:30...Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)

Other Flights

07:50...Medan (EK)

12:00...Riyadh (SV)

12:55...Doha (GF)
13:30...Al 'Arish (PF)
13:40...Sharjah (AH)
15:00...Rome (AZ)
18:00...Dubai (EK)
18:50...Tel Aviv (LY)
20:00...Cairo (MS)
20:10...Beirut (ME)
23:20...Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
04:40...London (BA)
08:00...Dubai (EK)

Royal Wings (RW)
(For Thursday and Friday)
07:45...Aqaba (RW)
09:05...Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50...Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20...Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30...Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20...Aqaba (RW)
22:50...Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45...Beirut (RJ)
06:20...Moscow (RJ)
08:40...Kuwait (add) (RJ)
10:35...Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
10:45...Aqaba, Paris (RJ)
11:10...Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:20...Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00...Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:20...Athens (RJ)

12:25...London (RJ)

16:00...Paris (add) (RJ)
20:10...Cairo (RJ)
20:20...Lamaca (RJ)
20:25...Jeddah (RJ)
21:00...Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:10...Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
23:30...Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights
03:00...Athens (OA)
05:15...Istanbul (TK)
07:45...Beirut (ME)
08:10...London (BA)
09:00...Amsterdam (GA)
13:30...Riyadh (SV)
13:45...Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:30...Annaba (Algeria) (AF)
14:30...Al 'Arish (add) (PF)
16:00...Rome (AZ)
19:00...Damascus, Dubai (EK)
20:10...Tel Aviv (LY)
21:00...Cairo (MS)
01:30...Amsterdam (KL)
07:45...Beirut (ME)
09:00...Dubai (EK)
09:25...London (BA)

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WHAT'S GOING ON

Queen Noor inaugurates Catalan masters exhibition, meets with UNICEF director

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday inaugurated the "Aurea Mediterranea" group exhibition by Catalan masters of the 20th century at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, according to a press release Wednesday.

The exhibition is organized by the Royal Society of Fine Arts, of which Queen Noor is patron, in cooperation with Generalitat de Catalunya, Institut Catala De La Mediterraia, Instituto Cervantes, and Agencia Espanola De Cooperacion Internacional, the statement continued.

Catalonia, a region of Spain comprising the four provinces of Barcelona, Gerona, Lérida, and Tarragona, is the richest and most industrialized part of the country. Prominent Catalan artists, whose work is featured in the exhibition, include Antoni Gaudi, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, and Joan Miro, the statement read.

The Catalan masters exhibition, which will be held until Oct. 28, is the first of its kind to bring the collective Catalan achievement to the Middle East and Jordan in particular, the statement continued.

Queen Noor was received by President of the Royal Society of Fine Arts HRH Princess Wajdan Ali, Deputy Minister of Culture and Minister of Social Development Mohammad Manser, Catalan Minister of Social Welfare Antoni Comas, and presidents and directors of the sponsoring institutes, as well

as high ranking Catalan officials, the statement concluded.

Also Wednesday, Queen Noor met with UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy, who is on a two-day working visit to Jordan, according to a press release.

Queen Noor and Mrs. Bellamy discussed UNICEF and the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) and the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF). Queen Noor commended the work of the UNICEF regional office in Amman and particularly the efforts of Dorit Alopaeus Stahl, who will be leaving UNICEF for her new post in Rome, the statement continued.

The Queen, who chairs the NTFC, emphasized the importance of UNICEF's role in providing technical and financial assistance for establishing the NTFC and in assisting the task force's multi-disciplinary committee in reviewing and developing the Draft Children's Act, according to the announcement.

Mrs. Bellamy said the children's act "is vital in protecting and promoting children's rights in Jordan" and highlighted "the vital role that the NTFC is playing in encouraging its adoption and implementation," the announcement read.

The NTFC has also contributed to the development of the upcoming programmes of cooperation between UNICEF and Jordan for the years 1998-2002, during which the two organizations will continue to

launch joint programmes and projects to advocate and train for children's rights, the statement said.

The NTFC will coordinate, collaborate with, and bring together existing institutions working in the field of child welfare through the establishment of the National Coalition for Children, whose membership will be voluntary and will involve registering with the NTFC through its research and database centre for children. It will compile comprehensive research in cooperation with UNICEF to highlight children's unmet needs and rights and disseminate data to all concerned institutions, according to the statement.

The Queen and Mrs. Bellamy also discussed the progress of the cooperation between the NHF and UNICEF in the field of child well-being and participation in areas of education, culture, and health. These include UNICEF's and NHF's Institute for Child Health and Development's support of primary health care training for Ministry of Health medical professionals, with increasing emphasis on the prevention and early detection of childhood disabilities, the statement continued.

According to Mrs. Stahl, UNICEF "regards NHF's Theatre in Education programme as an important tool in involving children in issues of importance to their own development and in their acquisition of health life-skills," the statement concluded.

Crown Prince calls for regional cooperation in water, energy issues

ISTANBUL (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has called for regional cooperation to deal with water, energy, and environmental issues, stressing that water can be a catalyst for encouraging such cooperation rather than serving as a source of contention and conflict.

In an address delivered on his behalf by Minister of

Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin, the Crown Prince suggested that a committee representing the concerned countries be formed to deal with this issue and cited the Euphrates River as a subject to be tackled, as its waters are of paramount importance to Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

In his address, which was delivered at an international conference on financing

water projects held in Istanbul, Prince Hassan said it was important for the concerned nations to conclude agreements on sharing the international rivers passing through their territories.

Such agreements could include means of protecting the water quality and suggest appropriate methods that safeguard the interests of all parties, he added.

Stressing the interconnection between water and energy, Prince Hassan said these two resources have strategic importance at the national, regional, and international levels.

Pointing out the need for the availability of water resources to ensure food production at a reasonable cost, the Crown Prince said water, apart from being an econom-

ic commodity, has social, economic, environmental, and political dimensions.

He said the beginning of civilisation was linked to farming, especially in the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia, adding that throughout history the strength of a nation hinged on irrigation projects and farming.

Opposition parties to enlist support of professional associations for protest rally

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Opposition parties said yesterday they will enlist the support of professional associations to hold a rally in protest of the government's decision last week to suspend publication of 13 weekly newspapers after being refused permission to assemble at the Professional Associations Complex yesterday.

A member of the Higher Committee for Coordination Among Opposition Parties told the Jordan Times that the parties, which were denied permission to hold the rally, would be asking the professional associations to host the event.

The committee member said opposition parties had abandoned the idea of hosting the gathering at another venue.

"It wouldn't be possible. We take it for granted that we would be refused permission another time, and the government has taken it for granted that we can't find another way to do it," he said.

Amman Governor Telat Nawayseh Tuesday refused to grant permission to the opposition parties to stage the event at the Professional Associations Complex in Shmeisani, on the grounds that such would be in violation of the Political Parties Law.

Article 14 of the parties law states that "the use of premises, instrumentalities, and assets of associations, charitable organizations, and clubs, for the benefit of any partisan organization, shall be prohibited."

Opposition parties and professional associations have been openly and adamantly critical of the government's recent "aggression against the press and freedom of expression," and have been trying since the introduction in May of amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law, to consolidate public opinion against the amendments.

President of the Jordan Dentists Association Sa'id Abu Maizar said the council of associations' presidents has not yet been approached by opposition parties, but said that the associations would view such a request favourably.

"The Jordan Press Association is one of our [own ranks], and we are definitely behind

the journalists on this issue, so if the opposition and the journalists asked, we would most likely support their request," he said.

Meanwhile, a prominent lawyer yesterday said the Higher Court's refusal Tuesday to issue an injunction against the government to stop the suspension of the 13 weeklies was not indicative of any future ruling by the court on the weeklies' case against the government.

The 13 weeklies filed a second case Monday against the government at the Higher Court of Justice to revoke the government's decision on the grounds that it "exceeded the spirit of the amendments" prescribed in the law. In it, they also included a request that the

court order the government to lift the suspension until it ruled on the case.

Lawyer Hanna Neddeh said the government order "has a presumption of legality" unless the case meets two criteria: the case has "merits on its face" or unless "the results of such an order would be irreversible" before the court had a chance to rule on any case filed against the government's order.

"An [injunction] is not something the court can easily give, but this also is no indication of any future ruling [on the weeklies' case]," he said. "The court could have as easily issued [an order to stop the suspension] and then refused to hear the case."

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Jordan, Japan waive visa fees

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Japan have agreed to waive fees for all types of entry visa to their countries by the nationals of the other side, effective Oct. 1, according to a Japanese embassy press release Wednesday.

It is aimed to help personal exchange and to enhance the already friendly relation between the two countries, the statement continued.

This arrangement was first proposed by the government of Jordan when HRH Crown Prince Hassan made an official visit to Japan in 1995, on the occasion of Jordan Week in Japan, according to the press release. The subsequent communication by Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda when he visited Jordan in 1996 paved the way to the present arrangement, the statement read.

For Japan, Jordan is the first Arab nation to have this mutual waiver. Japanese Ambassador Takayuki Kimura stated "it is another manifestation of the close ties which exist between the two countries. We hope this arrangement will facilitate Jordanian visitors to Japan and will also lead to more Japanese visitors to Jordan," the statement concluded.

Court sets date to hear case of man accused of 'honour' killing of wife, four children

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Wednesday set Oct. 7 as the date to begin hearing the case of a 40-year-old man who last May shot and killed his wife and four of his children, judicial sources said.

Awad Mohammad reportedly opened fire on his family shortly after midnight on May 13, killing his 35-year-old wife, Samar Salah, and his children Ahmad, seven, Basma, six, Sahar, one, and Ibrahim, four months.

Mr. Mohammad was quoted by officials as claiming to have killed his wife and children "to cleanse his family's

honour."

According to the prosecutor charge sheet, the suspect, who was married in 1987 and resided in several cities and countries, became suspicious of his wife's conduct five years after their marriage.

The charge sheet stated that in mid-1996, Mr. Mohammad started plotting to kill his wife and children, who he believed were not his, and bought a gun for that purpose.

At around midnight on May 12, the defendant locked his house doors, brought a gun and opened fire at his wife and six children.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court last week heard three witnesses in the case of a 34-year-old father accused of killing his two children in the Shmeisani area in September of last year.

"Mazen" Masri reportedly confessed to authorities last September that he poisoned his two children, Hanin, nine, and Hani, six, by administering two cyanide pills on the morning of Sept. 11.

However, four months later Mr. Masri retracted his confessions, claiming in court that he fabricated his statements to avert psychological pressure exerted on him by investigators.

The three witnesses, all criminal lab experts, clarified the error in the percentage of cyanide detected in the children's blood.

Earlier lab reports indicated finding between 600 to 650 milligrammes per litre. In last week's court session, the witnesses testified that there was a miscalculation, and that the cyanide amount detected in the children's blood was 60 to 65 milligrammes per litre.

The court adjourned the case to Oct. 13 to hear two more lab experts.

Prince Mohammad celebrates 57th birthday

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad Ben Talal, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, celebrates his 57th birthday today.

Born in Amman on Oct. 2, 1940 Prince Mohammad was educated at the Islamic College in Amman and pursued higher studies in Switzerland and Britain. Subsequently, he studied at the military college in Baghdad between 1956 and 1957, after which he joined the Special Royal Guard before becoming the King's military aide.

Prince Mohammad was president of both the Jordanian Tribal Chiefs Council in 1971 and the Higher Tourism Council in 1972, and currently directs the Jordanian Shooting Federation, the Royal Shooting Club and the Jordan Chess Federation.



Prince Mohammad married Princess Taghrid in 1981.

Both his sons are in the service of His Majesty King Hussein: HRH

Prince Talal is the King's military secretary and director of the National Security Council, and HRH Prince Ghazi is the King's cultural secretary.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

* Performance by the New Londonbeat at the Royal Cultural Centre parking lot on Friday at 7:00 p.m.

FILM

* "Los Gozos y Las Sombras" (parts I and II) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER '97 FESTIVAL

THURSDAY ACTIVITIES:

* Film entitled "Chilida" at 6:00 p.m.
* Graphics by Rafa Nasrifi of Iraq, Ziad Dalloul of Syria, and Najia Mehadji of the South Hall.
* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Qailoka at the Middle Hall.
* Sculpture, drawings, and paintings by Jordanian artist Rajwa Ali.
* Works by contemporary Arab artists at the Blue House.

* Paintings by children of Zarqa reflecting on the problem of pollution at the Byzantine church.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of Catalan masters of the 20th century entitled "Aurea Mediterranea" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 28 (except Tuesdays).

* Quilt exhibition "Piecing It Together" by Ms. Virginia Harris at the American Centre, Abdoun, until Oct. 20.

* Paintings by Fatima El-Helou at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Oct. 4.

* "The Projects of the Essence: Aspects of Italian Painting in the 90s" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 2.

* Works by Khlef Mahmoud Khlef at Hamourah Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Oct. 2 (Tel. 5536098).

* Paintings by Palestinian artists entitled "Palestine the Reality and the Dream" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 2 (except Tuesdays).

Holy See to open permanent mission in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Holy See has decided to open a permanent mission in Amman, which will be located in Ahdoun and entrusted to a resident Charge d'Affaires, Rev. Monsignor Dominique Rézeau, who arrived here Sept. 22 and will live in Amman, according to a press release Wednesday.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Holy See in 1994, Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Jordan and officially accredited to His Majesty King Hussein April 10, 1995, having his permanent residence in Baghdad, where he also represents Pope John Paul II, the statement continued.

Archbishop Lazzarotto, Apostolic Nuncio to Jordan, remains the head of the Apostolic Nunciature in Jordan, the statement read.

Msgr. Rézeau has been a member of the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See since 1980 and has served in Peru, Zaire, Switzerland, the Antilles, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, the statement continued.

He is coming now from Washington, where he was Counsellor to the Apostolic Nunciature in the U.S. Msgr. Rézeau is Prelate of Honour of His Holiness, Doctor in Canon Law, and a graduate from the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome, the statement concluded.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
GERMAN NATIONAL DAY
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OF
SIEMENS A.G.
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GLADLY CONVEY THEIR
FELICITATIONS AND CORDIAL
WISHES TO THE GOVERNMENT AND
PEOPLE OF GERMANY AND
MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN
EMBASSY IN JORDAN.

Indonesian minister admits responsibility as forest fires spread

JAKARTA (AFP) — Forest fires spread out of control in Indonesia Wednesday as the country's forestry minister admitted responsibility for the Asian environmental disaster and its residents launched a damage suit.

The fires, many of which have been going on for months on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo to clear land for plantations, have cast a pall of poisonous smog affecting aviation and millions of people across South East Asia.

Thick smoke has appeared in several areas in the mountains of Sumbing, Lawu and Gedongsongo on the island of Java, the official Antara news agency said.

It said Indonesia's forestry minister, Jamaluddin Suryohadikusumo, admitted responsibility for the inferno which experts say now covered up to 800,000 hectares.

Mr. Jamaluddin announced he was "ready to accept whatever decision from the head of state as an accountability for (his) duties," it added.

However, a person close to the minister told AFP that Mr. Jamaluddin was in any

case due to take a one-month leave for medical treatment in Europe.

The source said Mr. Jamaluddin has been well-regarded for his efforts to protect the country's forests and that it appeared that he was being set up as a convenient scapegoat.

Several mostly Muslim non-governmental organisations have filed a suit in a court in the Sumatran city of Medan against the Association of Indonesian Forestry Firms, Antara reported.

The court action seeks compensation of 2.5 trillion rupiah (\$7.5 billion).

Meanwhile, the government announced the arrest of 20 farmers for using slash and burn cultivation methods in the East Kalimantan province of Borneo. They face lengthy prison terms if convicted.

A researcher monitoring the rainforest disaster charged that some of the newer fires which broke out in the past two weeks were deliberately lit by displaced residents as a form of "revenge" against the government's inter-island resettlement policy.

The policy involves clear-

ing land as new sites for people relocated from the heavily populated island of Java and Bali.

"A lot of these fires have been set this way," the researcher, who asked not to be named, told AFP.

The Jakarta newspaper Kompas quoted Mr. Jamaluddin as saying that he had constantly run into difficulties preserving the forests amid "pressure to allow forest areas to be converted into plantations."

Slash and burn operations by timber companies combined with Indonesia's worst drought in half a century have been blamed for the devastating fires.

Indonesian reports said six people have died and nearly 40,000 others treated for respiratory and skin problems linked to the smog.

The U.N. Humanitarian Affairs Department warned in a report received here Wednesday that the country's rain forests were burning "out of control" despite widespread firefighting operations, and that unless heavy rain arrived soon, "the fires could burn for a long period."

The fires, which have also

hit national parks like the one near the tourist island of Bali, are threatening one of the world's most diverse collections of wildlife.

A tiger in a smog-hit region of Sumatra mauled to death a farmer working near a forest last week, Antara said Wednesday in the third such death from tiger attacks in the island since June.

The U.N. report said "it was now unlikely" that current firefighting operations, which also include more than 1,000 Malaysian firemen, would have any "marked effect" on putting out blazes which were "causing heavy air pollution" in six countries.

Mr. Jamaluddin threatened to revoke the operating licences of 176 mainly plantation companies which failed to meet an Oct. 1 deadline to submit a written report on why they should not be prosecuted for burning forests.

"Only 20 (companies) have opposed the accusation, but they have not submitted opposition in official reports," Antara quoted him as saying.

Amnesty slams Asian governments for treatment of refugees

BANGKOK (AFP) — Amnesty International Wednesday slammed governments in Asia and other parts of the world for their treatment of the growing number of refugees fleeing oppression across the region.

Serious human rights abuses across the Asia-Pacific region had forced at least 1.8 million people to escape their country and left another 1.7 million internally displaced, the London-based watchdog said in a report received here.

"An arc of refugee crises has emerged across the heart of Asia — stretching from Nepal, through northeastern India, the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh and across into Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand," Amnesty said.

"The vast majority of these people are women and children fleeing torture, 'disappearances', political killings and arbitrary arrest."

Amnesty accused governments of refusing asylum to refugees fleeing persecution and often pushing asylum seekers

back to face danger.

Most Asian states had not signed the U.N. convention on refugees and there was no regional body that had established a mechanism to protect the rights of the displaced, as is the case in Arab and African regions, the report said.

"Refugees seeking asylum in richer Asian countries face procedures that can be bewilderingly complex and unsatisfactory, where they have no access to independent advice or representation, and no real prospect of exercising their right of appeal," Amnesty said.

Amnesty urged regional governments to ratify the U.N. convention on refugees and not repatriate displaced people if they faced danger, while calling for the U.N. refugee agency and relief organisations to be allowed to provide aid.

Developed nations were also criticised for harsh treatment of asylum-seekers and of introducing restrictive legislation and visa requirements to obstruct refugees finding sanctuary.

Dental records of missing American hostage 'handed to Kashmir police'

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Dental records of a missing American hostage kidnapped by Kashmiri separatists two years ago have been sent to the authorities following the discovery of an unidentified body, police said Wednesday.

A police source said he believed the records were handed over by Michael Podratsky, a diplomat from the United States embassy in New Delhi.

The authorities plan to compare them with those of a body exhumed from a grave in Kashmir on Sept. 25. Police suspect the body could belong to one of four Western hostages kidnapped in 1995.

An U.S. embassy spokeswoman in Delhi declined to confirm whether Mr. Podratsky was in Kashmir in connection with the hostage crisis.

American Donald Hutchings was abducted along with Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan and German Dirk Hasert in

July 1995.

A fifth hostage, Norwegian Hans Christian Ostro, was killed by his captors in August 1995. Another captive, American John Childs, managed to escape.

Indian police said three forensic experts in Hyderabad were examining the remains. The dental records of the three other missing Westerners were also being requested, the source said.

The police earlier said the body was of a Muslim militant involved in the 1995 kidnapping.

A separatist group called Al Faran has claimed responsibility for the kidnappings and had demanded the release of some of their jailed colleagues before talks with the Indian authorities broke off.

In June last year, police exhumed graves in southern Kashmir without success after an arrested Al Faran militant said the hostages had been killed in December 1995.

Cambodian resistance 'shocked' at Hun Sen's 'flip' attitude at U.N.

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's resistance movement now battling the Phnom Penh government said Wednesday it was "shocked and concerned" that strongman Hun Sen was not taking their calls for peace seriously.

The four-party resistance which backs deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh said it was dismayed that Mr. Hun Sen, now at the United Nations, told reporters he was uninterested in peace talks with the prince.

"His flip answer: that he had nothing to say since Ranariddh didn't bother to say good-bye before he left the country, is a reflection of the lack of seriousness (Hun Sen) accords to the crisis," the Union of Cambodian Democrats (UCD) said in a statement faxed from their Bangkok headquarters.

"The Union of Cambodian Democrats does not consider the restoration of freedom and democracy in Cambodia a laughing matter," the statement said.

"We have long believed that the people of Cambodia, under the stranglehold of Mr. Hun Sen, are turning to us to bring about a peaceful resolution to the nightmare that began at the beginning of July with a bloody coup."

Mr. Hun Sen, Cambodia's powerful second prime minister, is in

New York seeking international recognition for his new government which effectively seized full power in Cambodia after fierce fighting on July 5 and 6.

The U.N. has decided to keep Cambodia's seat at the 52nd General Assembly session vacant as it is contested by Mr. Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh whose calls for a ceasefire and peace talks have been rejected.

Both men met U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan Tuesday and spoke to reporters afterwards. Asked whether he was prepared to meet Mr. Hun Sen while in New York, the prince replied that "he can call me, I am ready to talk with him." But Mr. Hun Sen, speaking through a translator to great laughter from onlookers, said: "I think I have no time to meet him (Prince Ranariddh), because when he left Phnom Penh he didn't say good-bye to me."

The prince left the capital unannounced the day before serious fighting began and has since said he was warned by his generals that Mr. Hun Sen was preparing a coup d'état.

Mr. Hun Sen, who was on holiday in Vietnam when the prince left, claims that far from attempting a coup d'état, he thwarted one being prepared by Prince Ranariddh and the Khmer Rouge guerrilla faction.

Commission recommends dismantling INS

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A bipartisan commission has recommended dismantling the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) and have its responsibilities shared by the justice, state and labour departments.

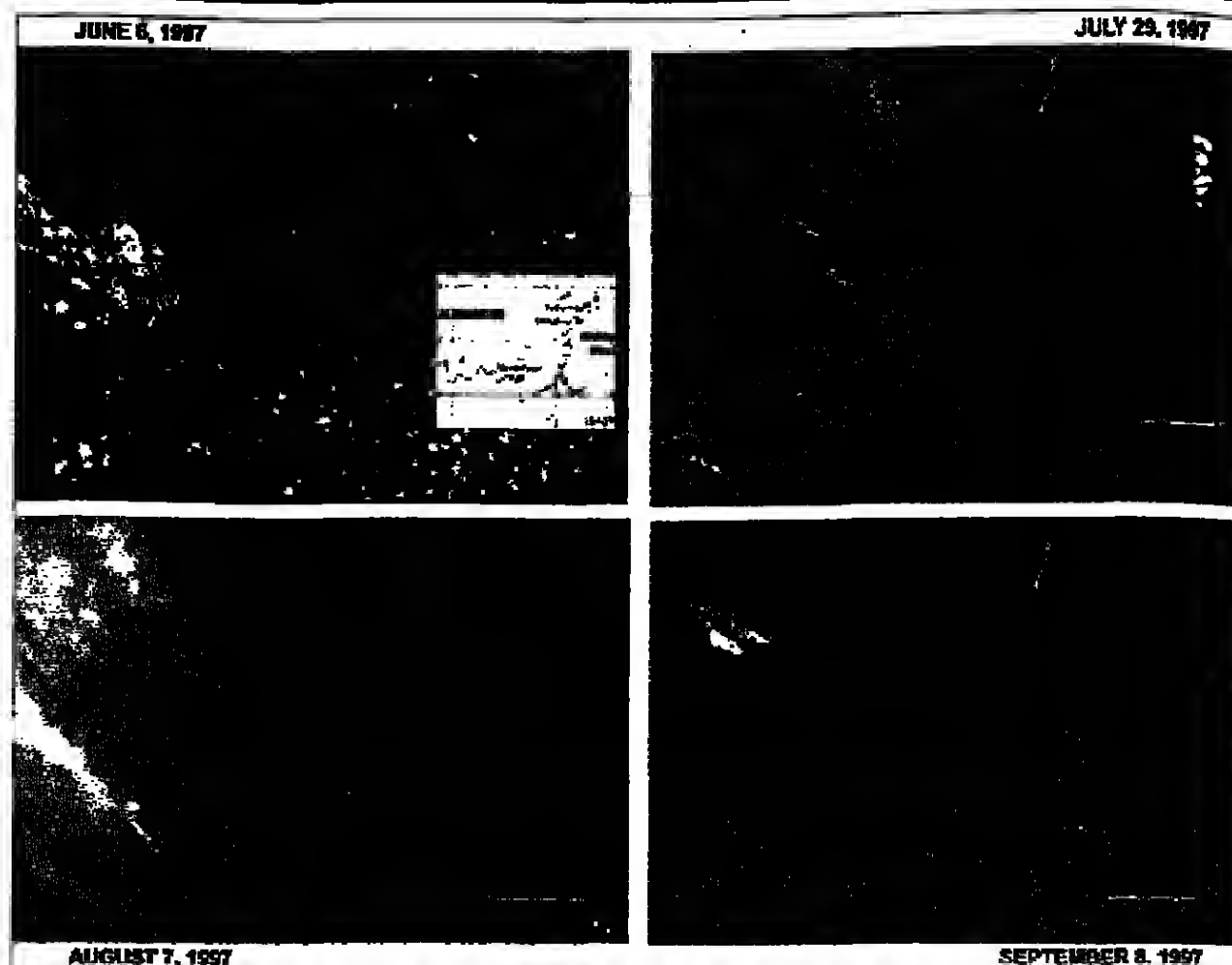
"No one agency can do everything now expected of INS," said former Education Secretary Shirley Hufstader, who headed the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform created by Congress in 1990.

The commission's report, issued Tuesday, confirms the view of INS critics who believe that problems with illegal immigrants, huge backlogs and mismanagement can only be resolved by getting rid of the agency. President Bill Clinton, in a prepared statement, was

cautious over the commission's recommendation. "This proposal raises difficult and complex issues, which need further consideration," he said.

But INS critics such as Kentucky's Republican Representative Harold Rogers have already ordered Attorney General Janet Reno to develop a plan that takes into account the commission's recommendations.

Under the proposal, the Justice Department would pursue illegal immigrants; the State Department would handle naturalisation applications; the Labour Department would be in charge of workplace violations, while a new Agency for Immigration Review would oversee appeals or immigration proceedings.



A series of satellite pictures received and processed by the National University of Singapore Centre for Remote Imaging, Sensing and Processing (CRISP) show that the Indonesian forest fires which have caused choking smog across Southeast Asia are no accident. The series of satellite pictures over a three month period near the town of Banjarmasin in Kalimantan State (see inset of location on top left picture) show how the healthy forest has been burnt away to clear land for plantations. Top left: June 6, 1997, picture showing the area almost all covered in healthy forest. Top right: July 29, 1997, picture shows plumes of smoke from the burning forest area. Bottom left: Aug. 7, 1997, burning continues and the area is now shrouded in smoke. Bottom right: Sept. 8, 1997, the amount of land cleared is revealed and smoke plumes can still be seen at left as clearing by fire continues (Reuters photo)

Hunt for Indonesian air crash recorders intensifies

MEDAN, Indonesia (AFP) — Investigators stepped up the search Tuesday for the black box recorders that hold vital clues to the cause of Indonesia's worst plane disaster.

The authorities have faced mounting pressure to find the recorders since last Friday's crash, which killed all 234 passengers and crew, as speculative reports have highlighted confusion between the pilot and the control tower. The plane also crashed near Medan while much of the region was enshrouded in smog caused by widespread forest fires in Indonesia.

"We are trying to cut the big wing and hopefully we will find something under it," said Garuda Airline District Manager Mohammad Chanin. He added that the task was complicated by the remoteness of the site and muddy conditions of the paddy field where the Airbus 300 crashed.

"When moving the wing you have to cut the trees," he said, as the area experienced its first sunlight after being shrouded in thick smog for several weeks.

"The situation is difficult because we cannot bring in heavy equipment and have had to bring more experts in," he added.

The search for the "black box" flight voice and data recorders from the wreckage of Garuda flight 152 was being coordinated by Airbus Industrie officials, with help of Garuda and Indonesian government investigators and hundreds of soldiers.

The plane crashed Friday in a jungle ravine 45 kilometres south of here.

"Today we continue looking for the black box using a helicopter," Mr. Chanin said.

"From the helicopter

maybe they can see the track of the flight," he added, as army rangers and police teams sifted through the wreckage.

Military search teams said they believed the plane hit a tree when flying along the Sibayak Mountain range in the heavy haze.

The aircraft's left wing struck the tree and catapulted the Airbus around nearly 180 degrees before it smashed into a terraced paddy field and exploded in flames, they said.

Search and rescue teams recovered most of the 234 victims by Saturday.

Debris was scattered across the field, with the twisted remains of the plane's tail section at one end and the nearly unidentifiable fuselage spread out over an area the size of a football field.

Passengers belongings, including children's toys, were seen lodged among jagged metal and shattered chunks of the aircraft's body.

Search and rescue teams recovered most of the 234 victims by Saturday.

although a few limbs were still being found, air force Lieutenant-Colonel B.S. Dandel said, adding "the most that we found were just pieces."

Forty-eight sets of unidentified remains were buried in a mass grave Monday. The unidentified or unclaimed remains of 13 victims believed to be foreigners had been removed from their coffins Wednesday.

The foreigners were spared the mass burial, which was held to meet Islamic requirements for swift funerals, because it was assumed they were not Muslims and some had been identified but not claimed, officials said. However, the coffins in which their shattered remains had been kept at the Adam Malik Hospital were empty Wednesday, except for some maggots.

A doctor at the morgue declined to say where the remains had been taken and referred queries to a provincial official who could not be immediately contacted. There were at least 18 foreigners on the plane, including French, Australians, Japanese and Americans. The remains of other victims of Friday's crash were identified and claimed by families.

There has been strong speculation the disaster was largely a result of the forest fire smoke that has blanketed South East Asia and reduced visibility at Medan Polonia Airport to 400 metres on the day of the crash.

A purported transcript of the last words exchanged between the pilot and air traffic controllers — whose source was unclear — indicated there may have been a serious misunderstanding over which way the aircraft should turn on the approach to Medan.

Unclaimed foreigners' remains taken from coffins

MEDAN, Indonesia (AFP) — Unidentified or unclaimed remains of "several" foreign victims of Indonesia's worst air disaster have been taken from their coffins to be stored in refrigerators because of their rapidly deteriorating condition, an official said here Wednesday.

Forty-eight other victims were buried in a mass grave Monday. But the foreigners were spared the mass burial, which was held to meet Islamic requirements for swift funerals, because it was assumed they were not Muslims and some had been identified but not claimed, officials said. However, the 13 coffins in which their shattered remains had been kept at the Adam Malik Hospital were empty Wednesday, except for some maggots. The coffins had been covered with flies when an AFP reporter visited the hospital Monday.

Garuda Airlines district Manager Mohammad Chanin said some of the remains of the 13 victims had been claimed by relatives while others had been removed from the coffins because of their deteriorating condition.

"They had to put them in refrigerators at the hospital," he said. The remains of other victims of Friday's crash, in which a Garuda Airbus 300 slammed into a ravine 45 kilometres south of here in thick smog killing all 234 on board, were identified and claimed by families. The plane exploded in flames, badly mutilating and burning the victims. Most of them were identified by clothing and jewellery they were wearing and their teeth and dental work. The remains were laid out in coffins in a car park at the hospital for relatives to search for their loved ones.

There were at least 18 foreigners on the plane, including French, Australians, Japanese and Americans.

Among the 13 sets of remains spared the mass burial were believed to be those of Chao Fong-Hsu of Taiwan and Paul Sterk and Masao Serikawa. The nationalities of the last two could not be confirmed. The remains of Malaysian national Wang Jui Jang were waiting to be claimed by the Malaysian consulate, a hospital official said earlier.

New AIDS drugs effective in only 53% of cases — study

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Protease inhibitors, the breakthrough medical therapy for people with HIV, are effective in controlling the virus that produces AIDS in only half the cases, a surprising new study says.

The study of 136 HIV patients at San Francisco General Hospital's AIDS Clinic showed that protease inhibitors taken for at least six months failed to stop the progress of HIV, which leads to the fatal and incurable AIDS disease, in 53 per cent of the cases.

Clinical trials of protease inhibitors had a much lower

failure rate of between 10 and 20 per cent, note the study's authors, who point out their research, conducted between March 1996 and March 1997, was set in the "real world" instead of controlled laboratory conditions.

Chief researcher Dr. Steven Deeks of the University of California at San Francisco attributed the high failure rate in his study to drug resistance built up by some patients from previous treatment programmes and to the inability of others to follow a complicated regimen of up to 26 tablets a day.

Dr. Deeks told the 37th Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy in Toronto, Canada, where the paper was presented this week, that he was not seeking to undermine the new AIDS drugs, which arrived on the market only last year.

"I don't want to take away from these protease inhibitors. They are absolutely powerful and dramatic drugs. It's just that they are not perfect," Dr. Deeks said.

Norm Robinson, executive director of ARIS, a non-profit San Jose, California group that offers

services to HIV-positive and AIDS patients, bolstered Dr. Deeks' findings.

"We're starting to see people who had been doing really well saying their numbers are starting to reverse. Undetectable viral loads are detectable again," Mr. Robinson said.

Protease inhibitors were hailed as a near-miraculous treatment after the AIDS epidemic had raged for more than a decade. Scientists said the drugs, which limit the proliferation of the virus, would transform HIV into a life-long, treatable disease like diabetes or asthma.

France would back free Quebec after referendum

PARIS (R) — French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin said Tuesday that Paris would support independence for Quebec if the French-speaking Canadian province voted in a referendum to secede, but not before.

"If the French government had to adopt a position, it would do so based on real events, and not according to events that have not yet occurred," Mr. Jospin said in a joint news conference with Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard.

It was the two leaders' first meeting since socialist Mr. Jospin came to power in a June 1 parliamentary upset.

Mr. Jospin's statements showed he was in line with conservative President Jacques Chirac, who said Monday that France would go along with any choice Quebec made democratically.

"The president... said that we will accompany Quebec on the path it chooses, and the French government thinks the same way," Mr. Jospin said.

The Canadian government downplayed the statements Tuesday, while sending a veiled message to France to keep out of the issue.

"I have discussed this problem many times with President Chirac, and he knows that this is a Canadian problem that will be solved by the Canadian people and not by the French government," Prime Minister Jean Chretien said in Ottawa.

Canada's National Unity Minister, Stéphane Dion, told reporters: "I (have) never heard the French government say that (in any place in the world) it would jump over the head of the state to recognise part of the state as an independent country."

He said Mr. Bouchard was putting the French government in a difficult position by asking France to stand out against international practice.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy said the Canadian government had not communicated with the French government on the statements.

But the government said it was happy with word Tuesday that France had decided to cancel its plans to issue a controversial postage stamp commemorating President Charles de Gaulle's fiery 1967 visit to Quebec.

Mr. Bouchard had said at the start of his Paris visit that "the spirit of General (Charles) de Gaulle will be hanging over" the trip. He was referring to the former French president's cry of "Vive le Quebec libre" (Long live free Quebec) made during an official trip in 1967.

The incident outraged the Canadian federal government but inspired separatists in Quebec.

Perhaps with that in mind, Mr. Jospin reaffirmed France's long-time policy on Quebec as one of "no interference, but no indifference" despite the strong bonds of friendship between Paris and the provincial capital, Quebec City.

The Quebec separatists in October 1995 lost the last referendum on the province's sovereignty by a razor-thin margin.

Mr. Bouchard has said he intends to hold a third referendum on the question but this could not take place until the province holds its next legislative election.



A policeman holds leaflets explaining anti-pollution measures as he checks car licence plates in front of the Eiffel Tower. Only cars with licence plates on which the first group of numbers ends in an odd number can drive within the city following high levels of pollution in Paris (Reuters photo)

Paris traffic clampdown cuts smog

PARIS (AFP) — Unprecedented anti-pollution measures allowing only half of Parisian motorists on the roads cut traffic jams significantly Wednesday, leading to an immediate reduction in smog levels, officials said.

As trains and buses were also made free to combat a pollution surge, experts said levels of nitrogen dioxide, which reached record levels Tuesday sparking the snap clampdown, fell substantially.

Congestion around the French capital was down by 50 per cent on a normal day during the morning rush-hour traffic authorities said, as the traffic-limiting measures were implemented for the first time.

By mid-morning the Air-Paris atmospheric monitoring agency said levels of nitrogen dioxide were substantially down, to 160 microgrammes per cubic metre compared to the record 442 mg per cubic metre Tuesday.

Confirming that the cut in traffic had an immediate effect on pollution levels, it said level 1 on the city's pollution index was likely to be reached during the day, but the pollution level was unlikely to go any higher.

There have been warnings that the decree, announced at such short notice, would cause traffic chaos. This was not evident Wednesday morning.

Socialist Premier Lionel Jospin took the lead, arriving at the weekly Elysee Palace cabinet meeting in an electric-powered car, as did four of his ministers.

"This is... what has to be done in these kind of circumstances," he said after stepping out of the green-friendly Peugeot 106.

Environment Minister Dominique Voynet ordered free public transport Tuesday after levels of nitrogen dioxide, produced by exhaust fumes, reached the maximum level of three on the city's air quality index.

Invoking legislation passed by the previous government but never before implemented, Mr. Voynet also ordered a traffic-limiting system allowing only vehicles with odd or even registration plates on the road on alternate days.

On the first day of the system, which way continues depending on pollution levels, vehicles with even-numbered registration plates were officially banned from Paris streets and in 22 neighbouring districts.

Police said most commuters respected the rules, which were monitored at some 100 checkpoints at key locations around the city. In theory motorists disobeying the rules faced a 900 franc (\$150) fine.

A police spokesman paid tribute to the "responsible behaviour" of motorists.

By the end of the morning rush-hour some 44 kilometres of traffic jams were recorded around Paris, compared with 62 kilometres at exactly the same time last Wednesday, according to the CNIR traffic control authority.

In theory the measures will last initially until midnight Wednesday. On trains, metros and buses there was no obvious surge in the number of commuters, although many travellers were pleasantly surprised to find they did not have to pay.

In another measure to persuade Parisians to leave their cars at home, residential parking was also free for the day. The pollution surge has been caused by a long period of calm, sunny weather, favouring a buildup of noxious gases threatening old people, asthmatics and other people with respiratory problems.

It was the first time air pollution has hit level three since November 1995. Last month, authorities reduced public transport fares by 50 per cent for a few days after a pollution alert to discourage people from using their own vehicles.

Mr. Voynet announced the measures at a press conference Tuesday, and Parisians were informed by the city's 172 public information boards, as well as by announcements at stations.

Retired U.S. agent cannot sue over Kennedy book

BALTIMORE (R) — A retired U.S. secret service agent has been told he cannot go to court over a book that claims he accidentally fired the shot that killed President John F. Kennedy.

U.S. district Judge Alexander Harvey dismissed the defamation suit filed by George Hickey of Abingdon, Maryland, against St. Martin's Press, Simon Shuster and Bonar Menninger, the author of the book "Mortal Error," saying Mr. Hickey waited too long to file the suit.

The book alleges that Mr. Hickey accidentally shot and killed the president in 1963, when he was a 40-year-old agent assigned to Kennedy's Dallas motorcade.

The book agrees with the Warren Commission finding that Kennedy was shot by Lee Harvey Oswald. But it says Mr. Hickey, who was in the car behind the president, grabbed an AR-15 assault rifle when he heard Mr. Oswald's shots and the gun discharged when the car he was riding in abruptly changed speed.

In his ruling Monday, the judge said Mr. Hickey filed his lawsuit too late for Maryland's one-year statute of limitations for defamation cases.

"Mortal Error" was published in February 1992. Mr. Hickey sued in April 1995.

Mr. Hickey's lawyers said he was critically ill when the book came out. They initially filed the lawsuit in

New Hampshire, which has a three-year statute of limitations. But the case was transferred to U.S. District Court in Baltimore because Mr. Hickey lives in Maryland.

Mark Zaid, one of Mr. Hickey's lawyers, told the Baltimore Sun newspaper that the book sold few copies when it first appeared. Many Kennedy experts have dismissed its claims. But its theory gained circulation with the release of Oliver Stone's film "JFK," and with reports and documentaries that accompanied the 30th anniversary of the assassination in 1993. "It's a case where the echo has been much more damaging than the book itself," Mr. Zaid said.

NATO takes action against Bosnian Serb Television

SARAJEVO (R) — NATO-led peacekeeping troops took over three television transmitters in Bosnia's Serb Republic Wednesday in a move aimed at halting attacks on the Dayton peace accords by hardliners.

A spokesman for the SFOR told Reuters there was an "ongoing operation" and that the international community's high representative to Bosnia Carlos Westendorp had requested military action against Bosnian Serb television.

Spokesman Jan Joosten said he could not confirm whether SFOR had taken the transmitters as the operation was ongoing. The operation interrupted radio and television broadcasts.

A Reuters correspondent said from 7 a.m. (0500 GMT) around 40 SFOR vehicles had surrounded the Trebevic transmitter near Sarajevo and an unspecified number of vehicles were stationed near the Udrigovo transmitter in northeast Bosnia.

A statement from SFOR

in Tuzla, in northeast Bosnia, said another transmitter in northern Bosnia near Modrica had also been taken over by the NATO troops.

The transmitters have been used by Serb Television (SRT) to broadcast propaganda against NATO and the Bosnian peace agreement by hardliners loyal to indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic.

The NATO action came a day after SRT rebroadcast a tape of a press conference by U.N. War Crimes Prosecutor Louise Arbour. SRT first doctored the tape so it misrepresented the tribunal and was told to rerun the real version with an introduction.

Mr. Westendorp had already threatened military action if SRT did not calm its propaganda war against NATO and the Bosnian peace agreement.

NATO officials at a meeting of alliance defence ministers in the Dutch town of Maastricht said the raids were made because the

Serbs had violated an agreement not to broadcast vitriolic attacks on the Dayton peace process and NATO.

Louise Arbour had prepared a one-hour broadcast which she expected under the agreement to be broadcast just as she presented it," said one official.

They tampered with it. They inserted anti-SFOR and anti-Dayton language into it. It was highly provocative," the official added. "In response, SFOR has gone in and seized several broadcast towers."

A statement obtained by Reuters from the Tuzla SFOR base, written in Serbian and signed by Arthur Bilski, spokesman of the Norwegian Polish Brigade, said forces had taken transmitters in Udrigovo in the northeast and Duge Njive near Modrica in northern Bosnia "without resistance."

It did not mention the transmitter at Trebevic. "This was done in retaliation to Serb radio television

which Sunday changed the speech of the U.N. Prosecutor Arbour. The change represents a direct violation of the former agreement between SFOR and SRT. The speech and the video tape have been changed to portray the office of the high representative and SFOR in a negative way.

"The operation was carried out at the request and with the support of U.N. high representative office to shorten or suspend any media network or programme whose broadcasting is constantly and obviously in contradiction with the peace agreement," the statement said.

The hardliners bowed earlier this month to pressure to give television access to Western-backed Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic who accused Mr. Karadzic and his allies of stealing millions of dollars belonging to the Bosnian Serb Republic.

Pope Brazil trip to focus on traditional family

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul II set off on a lightning trip to Rio de Janeiro Thursday to hammer home his belief that the traditional family structure is under threat around the world.

The Pope will spend four days in Brazil's most famous, violent and sensual city to preside at a "world meeting with families," which he concludes with a mass at Rio's Flamengo Park expected to draw up to 1.5 million people.

The trip, although brief, will again put the spotlight on the health of the 77-year-old pontiff, who often appears tired. The programme includes ample rest time and only two main engagements per day.

Church officials in both Brazil, the world's largest Roman Catholic country, and Rome, have said the Pope will not dwell on Brazilian issues because the event is intended to focus on the family.

But related issues such as abortion and the role of women are expected to figure in the eight speeches the Polish Pontiff will make on the trip, his 80th outside Italy.

"The Pope will speak to the whole world through the family," Cardinal Alfonso Lopez-Trujillo, head of the Pontifical Council for the Family, told reporters recently. "No institution can replace the family."

The Pope is a fierce advocate of the traditional family structure, which the church considers the basic building block of society, and believes it is threatened by cultural and social decay.

The Vatican opposes all moves to give legal recognition to forms of families outside the traditional mother and father structure, including units headed by same-sex partners.

The issue of birth control may also figure on the trip. In the past the Pope has said that birth control programmes could not be imposed on couples in the developing world, calling them "a form of neo-colonialism."

The Pope accused the United Nations Population Conference in Cairo in 1994 of attempting to force poor developing nations to accept birth control solutions that did not respect "the family" and a fundamental right to life.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that life begins at the moment of conception and ends with natural death.

Afghan alliance threatens U.N. 'spies'

KABUL (AFP) — The Afghan alliance fighting the Taliban militia Wednesday threatened U.N. workers based in the opposition stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif, whom they accused of spying.

A spokesman for the opposition Hezb-i-Wahdat faction said "serious action" will be taken against U.N. staff in the city unless the United Nations acts to stop Taliban jet raids.

The spokesman, Mohammad Haidari, speaking in a telephone interview from the besieged city, accused the workers of passing on intelligence to the Taliban.

"We know the bombardments are carried out according to the espionage activities of United Nations workers in Mazar-e-Sharif," he said.

The spokesman said Mazar-e-Sharif — the only Afghan city not held by the Taliban — has come under constant Taliban jet attacks for two days and civilian areas had been targeted.

"We strongly call on the U.N. to stop the bombardment of civilian areas," Mr. Haidari said.

"If this bombing continues, we consider the U.N. workers to be involved in these crimes and we will

take serious action against them," he warned.

It is unclear how many U.N. workers remain in the city. Most left more than a week ago during a lull in the three week-old battle for the seat of the anti-Taliban alliance's shadow government.

A number of expatriate staff from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Medecins Sans Frontieres group and other organisations remain in the city.

Independent sources reported Tuesday that heavy fighting is raging within 15 kilometres of the city, with a number of shells and rockets pounding areas within the city limits.

They added that there have been a number of jet strikes on Mazar-e-Sharif, in which aged ex-Soviet jets operated by the hard-line Islamic militia have struck civilian homes.

At least 45 civilians from one refugee camp were severely injured during one overnight bombardment, while many others are feared dead, the sources said.

The United Nations suffered massive losses in the battle for the city, when disaffected alliance troops

went on a looting rampage targeted at foreign aid groups.

Recent witness reports from the city say all U.N. offices have been "cleaned out," and armed gangs have been spotted dismantling the sheet metal roof of a World Food Programme compound.

The Taliban launched an attack east of Mazar-e-Sharif, which is 310 kilometres north of Kabul, from an enclave they have held since they were beaten out of the northern stronghold in May.

To the west of the city, the militia have gained support from local commanders of the Hezb-e-Islami faction, which like the Taliban is dominated by ethnic Pashtuns.

The patchwork of anti-Taliban forces includes Shiite factions Hezb-e-Wahdat and Harakat-e-Islami, the ex-Kabul government and ethnic Uzbek fighters loyal to rival warlords Abdul Rashid Dostum or Abdul Malik.

The Taliban hold around two thirds of Afghanistan including the capital Kabul which they seized one year ago, imposing a puritanical interpretation of Islamic law in areas they hold.

Russians get passports — minus hammer and sickle

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin Tuesday handed a group of teenagers the first new-style Russian passports, stripped of the Soviet-era hammer and sickle, and enlisted their support for his reforms.

Youth is at a premium in Russia today as the population shrinks. An international conference in Moscow Tuesday heard how 20-year-old Russian men have only a 50-50 chance of seeing 60 compared to 90 per cent for West Europeans. Heavy drinking, smoking and accidents cut male life expectancy to just 57.

Since his return to the Kremlin last spring after nearly eight months absent with heart problems and then pneumonia, the president has vowed repeatedly to make the market economy and democracy unassailable in Russia.

He faces difficult tasks in kick-starting economic growth after years of decline and harmonising relations between the Kremlin and the influential leaders of Russia's 89 regions — a harmony seen as crucial to national stability.

The government is trying to persuade the Communist-

dominated state Duma (lower house of parliament) to adopt an austere 1998 budget which, the Kremlin believes, provides conditions for modest economic growth next year — the first in a decade.

The Duma is also reluctantly considering a tax code aimed at unleashing entrepreneurial initiative and attracting foreign investment. With little hope of pushing legislation through the hostile Duma, Mr. Yeltsin is seeking potential allies elsewhere.

In another appearance Tuesday, Mr. Yeltsin urged leaders of town councils and rural authorities to help him fight for the draft budget and tax code. He said the bills would give them more financial autonomy.

"You must speak out firmly on this," he told a meeting of a commission of municipal and district officials in the Kremlin.

Mr. Yeltsin said that these and other recent laws would leave much of the state's revenue in the cities, towns and villages where they were collected rather than in federal hands.

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Freedom in proper context

THE INTERVENTION by His Majesty King Hussein which has led to the release of the ailing Hamas leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, yesterday must be seen and read in the context of Jordan's continued efforts to revive the faltering peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track. By securing the Sheikh's freedom, Jordan hopes that tensions on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides will be eased and a minimum deal of trust restored to pave the ground for a resumption of the talks. The negotiations, it must be remembered, have been halted due to extreme actions by the Israelis, whether in the form of stepping up settlement activity or disrespecting their commitments to the Palestinians under the Oslo accords, or by the armed wing of Hamas which has been waging suicide attacks against Israeli civilian targets.

Jordan, it must be understood, has a strategic and vital interest in the success of the peace process on all tracks but especially on the Palestinian front. Only last week His Majesty the King expressed fear that if extremists on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides had their way a war would erupt in the West Bank leading to a reoccupation of Palestinian towns and a new wave of refugees. Should such a scenario ever materialise it would lead to upheaval and violence throughout the region.

The Kingdom, therefore, would do whatever in its power to reverse the trend, ease the tension and restore confidence between the negotiating partners.

Jordan is in a good position to use its good offices with Hamas and Israel to negotiate a ceasefire between the two sides in a manner that would allow the Palestinian National Authority a breathing space in its quest to satisfy Israel's demands for security.

What remains to be seen is if the two parties have the goodwill and willingness to engage each other in a constructive dialogue that would save entire generations from fighting wars all over again.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi called for a united Arab stand in support of Iraq and against repeated Turkish invasions of Iraqi territory. The Turks had said after their last incursion earlier this year that their attack was the last, but they have done it again in total disregard of Iraq's sovereignty and Arab countries' protests. Rimawi said. The new incursion takes place ahead of the planned Turkish-Israeli-American military exercises which are said not to be directed against any country in the region, the writer said. He added that the new attack came on the heels of a visit by the Turkish president to Egypt where he sought to ally Arab fears about Turkey's intentions. According to Rimawi, the Turks could not have launched their repeated attacks inside Iraqi territory had Iraq not been in its present weak position as a result of the sanctions on its people. He called for a united Arab stand and the start of serious contacts with Ankara to end the crisis. He said steps in this direction are needed in order to defuse the present crisis and to prevent a recurrence in the future.

Al Dustour's Mohammad Daoud commented on scientific research saying it will remain lacking until sufficient funds are made available and qualified researchers are engaged in the promotion of the industrial sector. Daoud said a recent seminar held at the Jordan University of Science and Technology called for linking university education with industry, services and agriculture, a step, he found to be in the right direction. But he said funds and "brains" should be available to achieve that goal and enable the universities and the research centres to respond to the market's needs. The writer said the present one per cent of the profits of companies allocated to universities is insufficient, and more allocations must be made to finance research as is the case in most other nations. Without research, he said, there can be no development in any field, and the universities would remain impotent in meeting the country's needs. Daoud suggested that the Higher Council for Science and Technology be entrusted with securing funds and minds for the country's higher academic institutions to attain the required end.

View from Academia

The heavy price we pay

WE IN the Arab World of today, due to the noticeable regression of our overall moral values and work ethics (as reflected in our daily behaviour and practices both in public and in private) as a result of a complexity of factors, variables and developments, are fast losing (if we have not already lost) two extremely crucial and valuable things: our belief and commitment to the achievement of our ideals and our humanity. Yes, our very humanity.

What lessons are we learning, directly as well as indirectly, through the experiences we go through daily as schoolchildren, as pedestrians, as motorists, as workers, as housewives, civil servants, teachers, university professors, journalists, writers, mechanics, shoppers, customers, citizens, etc.? We are learning one lesson, and one lesson only: if you are shy, polite, civil, civilised, kind, nice, considerate, sensitive, commonsensical, refined, sophisticated, law-abiding, regulation-respecting, creative, innovative, talented, serious, hard-working, loyal, honest, fair, you will be (deliberately or inadvertently, though more the former than the latter) side-stepped, marginalised, cheated, deceived, used, hurt, harmed, injured, abused, stepped upon and crushed.

In the Arab World of today, there is simply no fairness and no justice in dealings. It is a Darwinian world in the worst sense — survival of the loudest, roughest, most aggressive, most pretentious, most uncivil, most unjust, most cunning, most ruthless, most shameless, most careless, most egotistical, most selfish, most vulgar. It is, alas, a society in which the subversive, destructive individuals are more valued than the constructive ones. When people fear you (fear your loud voice, your sharp tongue, your clique, your patrons), they recognise you; otherwise, you can go to hell.

Examples abound. What lesson are you taught as a worker or employee at our institutions, especially the public ones? One lesson: not to be nice, not to be oblig-

ing, not to be polite, not to be sensitive, not to volunteer to contribute beyond the bare minimum, not to care at all.

Why? Because there is no fairness or justice. You are nice, you are caring, you are efficient, you work hard, you contribute with enthusiasm, you serve diligently, but when the time comes for promotions, rewards, secondment, appointments to important positions and committees, you are side-stepped, forgotten, ignored, fought against, etc. Promotions, rewards, secondment, and appointments to important positions are reserved — by the few powerful but subversive administrators — for those subversive members of the various cliques whose full-time job is to backbite, lie, gossip, and stab others in the back.

When there was serious talk about administrative reform during the reign of the previous government and in the early days of the present one (an excellent idea which ought to be implemented, and urgently, in my opinion), a lot of people feared that the ones who would end up paying the price were the poor, nice, polite, serious, hardworking, efficient and excellent employees — not the inefficient and the subversive. Why? Simple: because the latter, who are more influential than the former, in fact, control these institutions and have the power to hire and fire; the former are the underdogs.

Under such unhealthy circumstances, what would you do, if you belonged to the type that worked hard, contributed, and excelled but because of your refinement and sophistication you were abused? You may continue to work hard in silence and invisibly despite the various frustrations and disappointments (and this is difficult), fight the subversive and the corrupt and be crucified by them, quit and find a more rewarding place in the private sector or abroad, or — as the case generally is — join the camp of the evil and the sinister.

Among these four options, the last one is the strongest.

If you want to make it at our institutions, alas, you have to become like the successful in them: loud, vulgar, hypocritical, aggressive and ruthless. This dismal situation applies nearly to all of our public institutions, including, ironically, those most "sophisticated," "refined," and "enlightened" which are supposed to spearhead and affect positive change.

But this sinister, perverse picture extends, as mentioned earlier, to encompass essentially all of our daily life. To survive and thrive as a motorist on our public roads, you have to be insensitive, vulgar, aggressive, and ruthless; to survive as a pedestrian, you have to be insensitive, vulgar, aggressive and ruthless; to survive as a participant in our conferences, lectures and symposia, you have to be insensitive, vulgar, aggressive and ruthless; even at informal gatherings with relatives and friends, you have to be insensitive, vulgar, aggressive and ruthless. And this applies also to students, teachers, carpeeters, writers, picknickers, passegers, etc.

No one recognises your existence if you are sensitive, shy, humble, polite, refined, sophisticated, diligent, hardworking, brilliant, and creative — though, ironically, these are values which our Arabic culture preaches, promotes and idealises in its formal discourse. This is sad; this is tragic. But it is more than sad and tragic; it is one of the root causes of why our society is not advancing an inch toward the achievement of our ideals. As long as our society tolerates and embraces the hypocrites, the liars, the mediocre, the egotistical, and the subversive, it shall continue to be what you folks see with your own eyes.

Is it not sad that courtesy and politeness on our public roads are a rarity? Is it not sad that courtesy and politeness at our institutions are a rarity?

Our very humanity is at stake, and our advancement and progress. This is a heavy price.

The Mideast conflict moves into dangerous new territory

By William Pfaff

PARIS — In little more than a year, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has changed from a secular war to a religious war.

A secular conflict is negotiable. A religious conflict is not, since the claims made by both sides have to do with eschatology and destiny. You cannot compromise when what you are struggling for is the expression of God's will.

The Clinton administration bears a serious part of the responsibility for this change. It abandoned the previous American role of impartial arbitrator between Jews and Arabs. By doing that it undermined the PLO and made the terrorists of Hamas the key actors on the Palestinian side.

Bill Clinton seems to have thought this smart in terms of domestic politics. It could actually ruin the presidential chances of Vice President Al Gore. If the Mideast peace process is destroyed, causing a new Arab-Israeli struggle, all on the Clinton administration's watch, Mr. Gore is not going to collect a big vote of

thanks from Jewish voters, or from anyone else.

Before Benjamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister of Israel, the country was governed by secular forces. The Labour Party belongs to the old socialist wing of the Zionist movement which created Israel.

Zionism itself was originally a secular movement among assimilated Western European Jews, and was condemned by some of the Orthodox devout as an interference with God's own plan for the Jewish people.

The Holocaust united most religious Jews with secular Zionists in the struggle to create an independent Israel in Britain's Palestine mandate. Britain had promised a Jewish national home, but the territory was populated (in 1947) by a million and a quarter Arab Muslims and Christians, to whom Britain had also promised security and eventual nationhood.

What followed is well known. The Arabs rejected various British and U.N. partition proposals. In 1948

Britain renounced the mandate and Israel was proclaimed, and effectively defected itself against attack by the surrounding Arab states.

Israel's first de facto recognition came from the United States, but the close alliance between the United States and Israel did not arrive until the 1960s. The Eisenhower administration in the 1950s held that "an emotional attachment should not interfere" with American national interest, and that "we cannot have our policies made in Jerusalem."

The Palestine liberation movement, formed in exile, was also a secular movement, in the style of the Arab national liberation movements of the period, whose emblematic leader was Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt is Nasser's direct political descendant, and it is significant that Egypt was the first

Islamic country willing to make peace with Israel.

Benjamin Netanyahu comes from a disaffected secular Zionist tradition. He and his Likud party derive from the "Revisionist" movement created by Vladimir Jabotinsky, who broke with mainstream Zionism in the 1920s because he favoured violence in the struggle against the British.

Unlike the mainstream Zionists who tried to convince themselves that the Palestinian Arabs would willingly allow the Jews to form their own state in their midst, Jabotinsky said the Arabs obviously would fight, and would have to be defeated and expelled from Palestine.

"When the Arab claim is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claim of appetite versus the claim of starvation," he said in 1937.

The Revisionist Likud party in modern Israel has

allied itself with religious parties for whom the Jewish return to Jerusalem and the Holy Land has signified the approach of the messiah. Mr. Netanyahu's government would fall if it lost their support. He is in one sense their political prisoner, but his hostility to the peace process resembles theirs.

They all, like the growing fundamentalist Islamic movements, including Hamas, reject compromise. The latter sees no peace until Israel is destroyed and the Israelis are expelled from the Holy Land — which is the Muslims' Holy Land, too.

An American-brokered peace dialogue was possible between a secular Israeli government, able to compromise, and a secular PLO that had to compromise. Since Mr. Netanyahu's election, the struggle has become one between Hamas and other Islamic militants and a Netanyahu government committed to the philosophy of Jabotinsky's Revisionism, politically deposed upon extremist

religious forces.

In such circumstances it is futile for Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to talk about "creating a serious climate for negotiation," while offering the odd implied and guarded criticism of Israeli policy.

Negotiation now is imaginable only if the United States were to present both sides with outline terms for a permanent settlement, and used the political and economic means at its disposal to impose those terms on both sides.

One can say that it is not for the United States to impose peace on the Israelis and Palestinians. But if it will not, honesty as well as honour would dictate that it acknowledge that it has nothing further to contribute to the relationship of Israelis to Palestinians, and withdraw. Its current conduct guarantees only that there will never be a settlement or peace.

International Herald Tribune

Mideast governments 'welcoming' UNDP report, 'asking for advice to help turn them round'

By Ian Williams

AN ORDINARY Arab's lot is not a happy one, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Despite all the faded oil money, per capita income in Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Somalia, Sudan and other countries of "failed growth" is at the same level it was in the 1960s. Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti (like Somalia and Comoros, a member of the League of Arab States, but with a largely non-Arab population) and the UAE are stalled at the 70s' level, while Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Syria reached their present income level in the 1980s. Oman and Tunisia are among the success stories, currently enjoying their highest ever.

Oil-free Jordan comes out as the best in the Arab World, and the eighth best in the developing world, above Panama, Uruguay and Thailand, for example.

Even those countries with relatively high incomes cannot ensure prosperity for many of their people. In particular, the adult literacy of 54.7 per cent is less than the average for developing countries — almost 70 per cent — let alone industrialised nations. Enhancing the disparity is the disastrously low figure of 40 per cent literacy for adult women. In the developing world, only in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are the figures for average life expectancy as low as in the Arab World. Arabs live on average only 62.9 years — 11 years less than the average for their industrialised counterparts and almost 18 years less than Japanese, Canadians and similar top-ranking countries whose citizens

can expect to draw their pensions on average until they are almost 80.

Of course there are disparities within the region. Bahrain has 84 per cent adult literacy, and Kuwait has a 75 year life expectancy. Djibouti falls off the bottom end of the scale with a 48.8 life expectancy and a 45 per cent literacy rate.

The figures are from the 1997 Human Development Report, Published by Oxford University Press annually since 1991, on behalf of the UNDP, the report has been on the front line of defence against the neo-liberalism of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, which traditionally held that as long as interest on foreign debt was being paid, and government spending was shrinking, then all was well with the world. That attitude led to the Structural Adjustment Programmes, in which many Arab governments cut welfare, health and education programmes to secure international loans. The resulting riots made the two institutions probably more successful than the Comintern in fanning the flames of social discontent.

To counter this preoccupation with macro-economic statistics, UNDP designed the Human Development Index, which measures how well the people of a country are doing, rather than how secure the bankers dealing with it felt. It is based on a combination of health, income and education statistics. The report and its concept has helped the development debate to focus on supposed beneficiaries, and its influence was almost certainly responsible for a change of tack by the World Bank, which now says it wants to see vulnerable groups protected under its programmes.

Quality of life

This year UNDP branched into a more esoteric field — but one which goes a long way towards explaining the disparities in many of the figures for the Arab World. The Human Poverty Index measures deprivation. It is derived from a combination of what percentage of people will not

survive until 40 years old, what percentage of adults are illiterate, and what percentage do not have access to a decent standard of living. This in turn is measured by lack of access to clean fresh water, to health services and to the percentage of children under five malnourished.

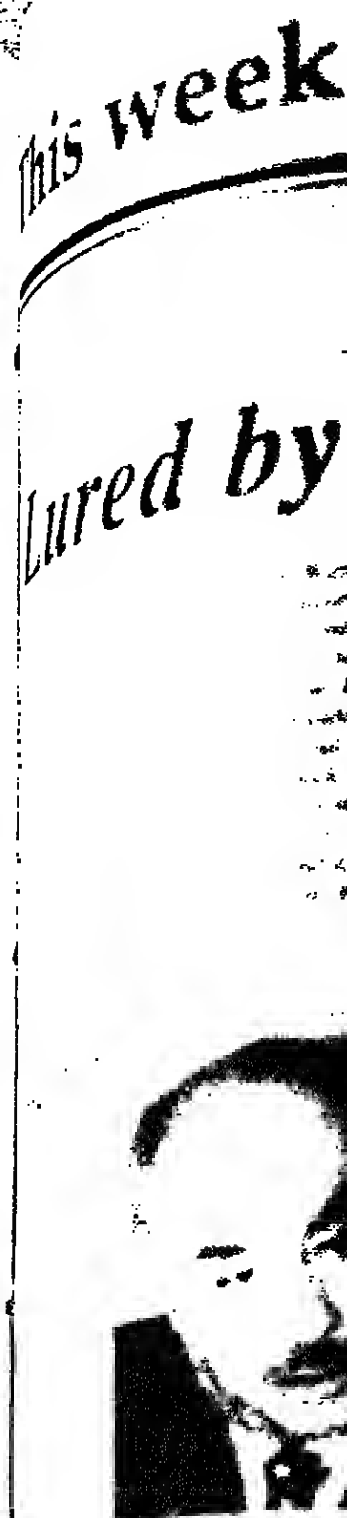
This produces some surprises. Oil-free Jordan comes out as the best in the Arab World, and the eighth best in the developing world, above Panama, Uruguay and Thailand, for example. Sudan and Yemen come out worst in the region. The report also addresses the plight of the Palestinians in the territories, pointing out that their per capita income has actually dropped by 25 per cent since 1992. Two thirds of them live below the poverty line, even by local standards.

One conclusion that is clear from many of the measurements is that poor results for women pull down national figures, on income, education and literacy. In Morocco, for example, a stunning 69 per cent of women are illiterate. War-ravaged Lebanon is down to 10 per cent, and many others, in the Gulf states and Jordan for example, about 20 per cent of women are illiterate. But even in Egypt (61 per cent), Iraq (55), Tunisia (45) and Saudi Arabia (50) this represents a tremendous waste of human resources. As one development worker pointed out, if a mother cannot read or write, she cannot help in the education of her own children, thus perpetuating the cycle.

There are many factors that have inhibited industrial and social development in the Arab World, but the report indicates that one major reason is this neglect of the poor and women, who are often, but not always the same. Another is, of course, the diversion of resources from education and health into military expenditures. The statistics suggest that governments have been spending more on health and education and less on military — except of course for Iraq.

UNDP staff involved say that one positive aspect of the report is that, far from deifying its figures, many Arab governments have been welcoming the revelations and asking for advice and help on how to turn them round.

Middle East International



Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

Society on the move

Lured by attractive challenges, people make moves

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, who was in Washington to deliver a message from His Majesty King Hussein to President Bill Clinton and to discuss with the president efforts to push the peace process forward, paid a visit to the King's embassy and the Jordan Information Bureau on Tuesday. The Crown Prince met with Ambassador Marwan Muasher and JIB Director Rania Alah and their staff members, toured the various operations of both offices and thanked all involved for their efforts, particularly their work with the U.S. Congress. Incidentally, the U.S. aid programme to Jordan is still being finalised, and a high level meeting on the subject was expected very soon, followed by an announcement.

Chemicals was established in 1983 at the Sahab Industrial City. Dr. Bashir, who was in Baghdad recently, will take the seat of Dr. Muhmoud Nusair, who is expected to carry on at the company in a new, yet undisclosed capacity.

Einein to the institution. Mr. Asfour's vice president is Leith Qassim, head of the Jordan Technology Group, established around 8 years ago.

International and organised by the Royal Society of Fine Arts is the presentation of *Aura Mediterranea*. This group exhibition by Catalan masters of the 20th century is on display at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts. It was opened last night under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, and will run through Oct. 28.

NO INJURIES REPORTED

There on the home front, the row that was brewing over Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi's recent statements admonishing ministry doctors for not living up to standards has been quieted. Members of an ad hoc committee formed to counter the accusations, say they met with the minister on Tuesday and agreed to hold a meeting between Dr. Kurdi and members of the Jordan Medical Association in the next two to three days to resolve their differences. Dr. Kurdi had reproved public sector doctors in a televised statement last week prior to his departure for Oman. The doctors took grave offence and retaliated saying they were doing the best they could with the means made available to them. With a dialogue started, the prognosis is good, say the doctors. In any case, the \$9.3 million the Japanese government is allocating to Jordan for diagnostic and therapeutic equipment and ambulances should prove a boost.



Ashraf Kurdi

READY FOR THE BENCH: In Karak at Muto University, recently promoted to Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Noman Khatib is reported to be a candidate for a seat at the Higher Court of Justice. His colleagues say they "wouldn't be surprised" as Dr. Khatib, a full professor of law, has spent many years lecturing in general law and was also assistant for legal affairs to the Muto University president. On the extra curricular side, Dr. Khatib is the current president of the Sports Federation for Jordanian Universities.

INDUSTRY HOP: Faysal Abul Einein, general manager of the Bank of Jordan for more than seven years, has made a switch to the Jordan Gulf Bank. Mr. Abul Einein said the Jordan Gulf Bank presented a new challenge for him. At the bank's recent board meeting its members passed a resolution appointing Mr. Abul Einein as general manager and his predecessor, Charles Greiss, as a consultant to the bank. At the Bank of Jordan, Deputy General Manager Mohammad Qassim has been promoted to general manager. Mr. Qassim has worked at the bank for more than three years, having previously been deputy manager of Cairo Amman Bank, and logging 13 years of senior experience with Citibank in Amman, Istanbul and Khartoum.

HATS OFF TO HER: For her steadfastness as private secretary to six prime ministers, some of them repeat appointees, Susan Hawwa, has been promoted to the rank of first degree. Since 1988 Ms. Hawwa has run the private office operations of some of the country's most high-profile prime ministers through some of the Kingdom's most trying and momentous times. The PMs are Zeid Rifai, HRH Prince Zeid Ben Shaker (twice), Taher Masri, Abdul Karim Kabariti and Dr. Abdul Salam Majali (earlier and currently). Her earlier experience as a teacher has armed her with the prerequisites for the job—patience and perseverance. Ms. Hawwa is married to Bishara Bishara, proprietor of the Bishara Golf Club. The couple have a son named Rakan.

UP HIS ALLEY

The Amman World Trade Centre, established six years ago, has elected prominent businessman Mohammad Asfour as president for four years. The term of office was extended from two to four years according to the WTC's by-laws. Mr. Asfour, who is proprietor of Comcent Company, a contracting and trade firm, was president of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce. He is also member of the board of the Jordan Gulf Bank and thus had a say in bringing Faysal Abul



Mohammad Asfour

A 'PEARL' OF A TRIBUTE

A doctor and diplomat-artist has made a grand impression on the French. In recognition of her voluntary work and her endeavours to foster French-Jordanian ties, paediatrician Fethieh Saudi was awarded France's National Order of Merit by President Jacques Chirac. At a ceremony Tuesday evening at the home of French Ambassador Bernard Bajelet, the ambassador presented Dr. Saudi with the award. Dr. Saudi was the founder of the French-Jordanian Medical Association, and is the author of a book in French about the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon where she worked in Palestinian refugee camps. She has been a consultant for UNICEF and has been very involved in community service. Attending Tuesday's ceremony were HRH Prince Ra'ed Ben Zeid, who is honorary president of the French-Jordanian Medical Association, Princess Majda, Minister of Social Development Mohammad Khair Mansour, head of the General Union of Voluntary Societies Dr. Abdullah Khatib, Dr. Assad Abdul Rahman, and poets Fadi Yousef and Mahmoud Darwish. Dr. Saudi said she was deeply touched by France's recognition of her work and thus that of all Jordanian doctors.



Fethieh Saudi

READ IT IN ARABIC: Several diplomatic, diplomacy-related, and cultural entities are making diverse presentations of their talents here in Jordan. We start with the launch last Tuesday of the Arabic version of the book entitled *Towards a New Scenario of Partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean Area*. The launch was the effort of the Institute of Diplomacy (ID), which Dr. Abu Jaber now heads, in cooperation with the Instituto Cervantes, under the new directorship of Lola Infante, who is moving at full speed in making up for lost time and events when the centre was director-less. The book, published by Institut Catala de la Mediterrania, was presented by ICM President Professor Baltasar Porcel. The activity is part of the ID's efforts to establish channels of cooperation and exchange with research centres and international cultural institutions.

Another event held in cooperation with Generalitat de Catalunya, Institut Catala de la Mediterrania, Instituto Cervantes and Agencia Española de Cooperación

THE MANE EVENT: On the occasion of the VIII Arabian Horse or Home Festival, the Equestrian Federation is presenting an Arabian horses photographs and paintings exhibition by renowned Jordanian photographer Zohrab and artist Ibrahim Shalabi at the Royal Stables Club in Hama. The exhibition opened yesterday and will continue only through tomorrow. It is being held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein.

GLAZED OVER: Under the patronage of Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan, the embassy of Japan and the Japan Foundation will present the works of Japanese potter Soei Obiya from October 5 to 9 at the Royal Cultural Centre. Born in 1923 in the Republic of Korea, Mr. Obiya developed a particular style in hand-twisting and specialises in hand-formed pottery (white-ship ware, Turkish blue glazed ware, tokabeni and hasekibeni enamels, and his own Obiya tea bowls and Obiya blue ware). He will also lecture at the Young Muslim Women's Association Centre for Special Education on Monday Oct. 6 at 4:00 p.m.

THEY SPEAK OF JORDAN: Featuring Jordanian women of talent, and under the Patronage of HRH Princess Wijdan Ali, "Murmurs at our Land" is a new exhibition of paintings by Riham Ghassib and weaving of the Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project. The display can be viewed at the Bani Hamida House until Oct. 31.

SEE YOU AT THE FAIR: Billed by its organisers as "the social event of autumn" the International Community School's annual food fair is on for tomorrow (Oct. 4) at the school's premises in Khilda. Admission for adults is 1JD, and for children 500 fils. On the programme besides home-made dishes from 15 countries are raffle prizes, a gymnastics performance, children's games, gate prizes, pony rides and, of course, singing and dancing. The fair will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Jennifer Hamarneh

A glossary for the weekend

By Jean-Claude Elias

"ACCEPT A COOKIE?"
"detect primary slave,"
"detect primary master,"
"adjust to host adapter,"
"open data base connectivity,"
"automatic fall back,"
"boot sector infected,"
"defragment fixed drive,"
The above are no misprints. This is still the same Chip Talk you know. Contrary to what you may think, the editor of the Weekender didn't lose his mind and mix up this column with another. The above expressions do belong to the world of personal computers, to their operating, their software and their hardware. They have become part of the daily life of the typical PC user who may see them regularly on the computer's screen but may not know what they exactly mean, or if they are friendly remarks or aggressive warnings.

As glamorous or mysterious as they may sound these messages that appear on a PC's monitor often refer to common situations or problems. I would like to provide here a simple explanation for a few of them. Any message or expression that do not belong to the domain of simple PC computing has been avoided.

Accept a cookie: When browsing a Web site on the Internet, you may reach a point where the computer you are connecting to may want to know who you are (that is your e-mail address). Accepting a cookie means allowing the other party to have your

address. Detecting primary slave: A message that appears when you start up a modern PC like a Pentium, and that tells you that the system is looking to see if a second, a third or a fourth drive (hard disk, CD-ROM, etc.) is installed and connected.

Detecting primary master: Similar to the previous message. Checks if a first hard disk drive is installed.

Server does not respond: The server is the main computer (PC or other) to which another computer, typically your home or office PC, is linked. When a server is switched off, is out of order or is too busy being accessed by a large number of computers, it will not respond to your attempt to connect.

Adjust to host adapter: Means the PC is making automatic adjustment to connect to an internal SCSI interface card-adapter, the host being your computer.

Open data base connectivity: A software feature that allows a computer system, mainly Windows, to understand different formats of data base information and share them together. It is an important characteristic for compatibility between programmes like dBase, MS-Word, Access, Paradox, etc.

Automatic fall back: When a device like a modem tries to connect to another at a certain transmission speed and the other party cannot match this speed, the first device "falls

back" to a lower speed in order to be able to communicate with the slower one.

Boot sector infected: The boot sector is the section on the main hard disk of your PC that contains the essential set of information that allows the whole system to start up. If it is infected, that is by a virus, your PC may not work at all. Defragment your fixed drive: When the number and the size of files on the hard disk grows beyond a certain limit, the operating system (Windows, DOS, ...) starts placing the files in a disorderly manner. This "messy" situation of files causes the whole PC to slow down, wasting time searching for files. We say that files are then fragmented. The defragmentation is a simple procedure that puts some order in the way files are stored on the hard disk. It not only improves the system's overall performance, but also contributes to free some disk space.

Shield installed: A software protection against viruses. The usage of a virus shield allows the PC to detect viruses that may come on a removable media like diskettes, before they infect the system.

FAQ: An acronym for Frequently Asked Questions. Most new programmes includes a FAQ section that tries to answer commonly recognized problems.



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FEATURING:

THE NEW LONDON BEAT



Royal Cultural Center
Parking Lot
Friday Oct. 3, 1997
at 7.00 P.M.
Ticket: JD 7

المركز الثقافي الملكي
الجمعة: ١٩٩٧/١٠/٣
الساعة ٧:٠٠ مساءً
سعر التذكرة: ٧ دينار

Ticket Sales Location:
Moka Café
Hard Rock Café
Istiklal (Shemesani)
Royal Cultural Center
Freddy for Music
Books @ Café
Music Box (7th Circle)
GI Rho Ma (Sweifheh)

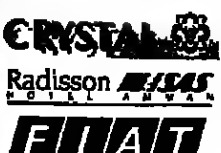
تذاكر التذاكر لدى:
موكا كافيه
هارد روك كافيه
الاستقلال (الشيمساني)
المركز الثقافي الملكي
فريدي للموسيقى
بوكنز أت كافيه
ميوزيك بوكس
جي روه ما (المصيفيه)

Supporting Band
Black Iris



Hard Rock Café
Saturday Oct. 4, 1997
at 8.00 P.M.
Ticket:
Dinner-Concert: JD 40

هارد روك كافيه
السبت ١٩٩٧/١٠/٤
الساعة الثامنة مساءً
سعر التذكرة: ٤٠ ديناراً
شاملاً العشاء



Lebanon considers austerity measures

BEIRUT (AP) — The government Wednesday prepared to draft an austerity budget amid economic uncertainty over Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's failed proposal to raise \$1 billion to meet expenses.

The budget for the fiscal January-December 1998 envisages belt-tightening measures. State Minister for Finance Fouad Saniora said in remarks published ahead of a special cabinet session to draft the budget document.

Analysts say Lebanon will have to take tough measures to plug waste and streamline expenditure in the face of growing budget deficit, which has already shot up to more than 50 per cent this year after a government forecast of 37 per cent.

Things are not going to be much better next year either. Mr. Saniora, refusing to give details of the new budget, said the government will spend 42 per cent more than it will earn in 1998.

Lebanon was plunged into a crisis last week when the cabinet voted down a proposal by Mr. Hariri to raise up to \$1 billion to meet growing expenses of public services.

Mr. Hariri, who is overseeing a multibillion dollar post-war reconstruction, proposed up to 50 per cent increases on gasoline prices and a five per cent sales tax.

He said the extra money will fund programmes for rural development, rehabilitate people displaced by the 1975-90 civil war and pay debts owed to private hospitals providing public health care.

Opponents demanded a detailed blueprint of the plan, saying they do not trust the money will be well spent given suspicions of widespread corruption in government. They also

said the plan would hit the poor hardest.

The wrangling put pressure on the Lebanese pound, prompting central bank intervention Monday to curb a rush to buy dollars.

The central bank Monday raised the repo rate to 50 per cent from 23 per cent. The repo rate is the key short-term interest rate the bank offers on short-term securities transactions.

Central bank Governor Riad Salameh acknowledged that the pound came under pressure but reassured the nation that there was no run on the local currency.

The respected daily An Nahar said the central bank pumped about \$100 million into the money market to stabilise the pound.

The pound remained stable Tuesday, selling at 1,533 to the dollar, unchanged from Monday's closing.

The pound, worth 2.2 to the U.S. dollar before the civil war, fell to nearly 3,000 to the dollar during the conflict. But it has been steadily improving since Mr. Hariri took office in 1992.

Iranian president calls for foreign investment, technology

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami called Wednesday for greater foreign investment and transfer of technology as he inaugurated an international trade fair here.

President Khatami said Iran was ready to "embrace foreign capital and technology in a bid to achieve economic growth." He also assured other countries that the Islamic republic "will strive to remove political tension."

He also criticised industrial countries, without mentioning any by name, for not sharing more technology with developing countries.

"This is discrimination. Science and technology should be fairly distributed and everyone should have access to it," he said.

His criticism was aimed at Western countries, notably the United States, which have banned the export of "dual-use" technology to Iran for fear that they could be used to develop weapons.

The United States has imposed a unilateral economic embargo after accusing Iran of seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction and of sponsoring international terrorism.

Calling for greater economic cooperation between Iran and other nations, President Khatami said that "if nations link their interests with each other, then statesmen will be forced to conform."

Iran's Trade Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari said that foreign companies, mainly European, had made a strong showing in the fair, which is to last until Oct. 9.

Some 1,070 companies from 63 countries and 1,700 Iranian firms are participating in the 23rd Tehran International Trade Fair.

Mr. Shariatmadari said "the growing number of foreign participants indicates that American efforts at isolating Iran has been in vain."

Every year there are more countries interested in boosting economic relations with us. Since the end of its 1980-1988 war against Iraq, Iran has been trying to attract foreign investment. But there has been little response due to the country's tough foreign investment laws and because of growing U.S. pressure.

Washington warned Monday it was investigating grounds for possible sanctions on the French energy firm Total for signing a \$2-billion contract to explore an offshore gas field in Iran.

Total has violated a 1996 U.S. law which seeks to penalise non-U.S. companies that invest more than \$40 million in the energy sectors of Iran or Libya.

Meanwhile, strict government regulations on Iran's non-oil exports have triggered a crisis in many industrial and agricultural sectors, as the Islamic republic's new government wavers on what economic course to follow.

The troubles began when Iranian authorities intervened in the economy in May 1995 to curb exports, control prices at home, stabilise the national currency and ensure the repatriation of foreign earnings.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19) There's plenty to keep you busy, but you're in an excellent mood. It's a good time for romance, too. Travel is favoured later on this evening. There's a bit of a problem right around dinner time, however. Your friend and your sweetheart have different plans for your time.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20) You'd love to stay home, but you can't. At least not all day. Don't worry. Whatever is going on there can wait a while longer. You'll still have tonight to talk about it. Once you get your plans made, you can start on the project tomorrow.

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 21) It's finally time to start all the projects you've been dreaming about. Is there anything you want to build? How about taking a class, or teaching one? It's a marvellous day to make a presentation in front of a group. They'll buy whatever you're selling.

MOON CHILDREN

(June 22 to July 21) There is money coming in, but it's bringing some sort of hassle. Maybe it's not as much as you expected. Or maybe you owe more than you thought. It's also possible you've fallen in love with an item you can't afford. Don't worry, it's just a matter of time.

LEO

(July 22 to August 21) Focus on opportunities that involve travel or foreigners. You know what needs to be done, so do it. In romance, you're sort of stuck. It will be easier for all concerned if you go along with the other person's idea. It doesn't matter that much to you anyway.

VIRGO

(August 22 to September 22) If you want a little extra money, you're in luck. Offer to do the laundry, ironing, bookkeeping and all those other tasks you enjoy so much. You can name your price. Nobody else is in the mood. Why waste your spare time? Use it to become fabulously wealthy.

LIBRA

(September 23 to October 22) You are naturally a team player. You can be either the leader or a follower, as the situation warrants. Start by doing the job you've been assigned. Meanwhile, look around to see what's coming next. If you notice any hassles brewing, head them off. That's your greatest skill.

SCORPIO

(October 23 to November 21) Your duty is to feed information to a person in a position of authority. You can be forceful about it, even insistent. If people are having trouble making up their minds, make up their minds for them. That's something you enjoy doing. You're good at it, too.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21) If you can find an excuse to get out of town, do it. You'll have a great time. If you're on business, you'll make lots of sales. If you can take along your sweetheart, so much the better. Conditions are excellent for both romance and travelling. Start as soon as possible.

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20) You'd better lean on your troops hard if they won't get the important stuff done. Forget about the rest of the work. They're more interested in flirting with each other than anything you can offer. Check the major items off the list, then turn them loose!

AQUARIUS

(January 21 to February 19) The action is fast-paced, but casual. Interesting, but not scary. Well, there are a couple of tense moments, but you love that. You might even be creating them. The emphasis is on learning. So, give up control. That's the place where learning occurs.

PISCES

(February 20 to March 20) Keep creating. You're going through a very productive phase. You've got a few annoyances, but that's OK. One of them is the pressure you're under. You've used up all the slack. You're responsible for something getting done and now you have to do it. Enjoy!

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19) The morning could be a little difficult. Finish what you've started first thing. Your sweetheart wants you to do a favour, and your job is very demanding. That's OK. You're lucky, happy, and your attitude is excellent. Get out there and show them you can do it.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20) There is something that needs to be discussed. A decision needs to be made. Talk it over with your family later tonight. You'll get some excellent advice. Make time to think it over carefully. Listen to all the opinions. There's a solution that works for everybody.

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 21) You're learning very quickly, and your confidence level is high. This is good, because you need to explain your project. This might involve training someone to do part of your job. You may be a little bit squirrely in the morning, so tackle this task later in the day.

MOON CHILDREN

(June 22 to July 21) Review your budget this morning. There's money coming in. First, figure out exactly what you need to buy. This is important. There are a lot of temptations out there. Then, decide what you can afford to spend. This evening is your best time to shop.

LEO

(July 22 to August 21) It's a good time to travel or make contact with a foreigner. This could be both lucrative and fun. And conditions get better as the day progresses. Tonight plan something special and a little unusual with a person you love.

VIRGO

(August 22 to September 22) All the athletic types will be bouncing around in a great mood. They're also thinking up all sorts of jobs for you to do. It will be relatively easy for you to become indispensable. You're a master at this sort of thing. It's tough sometimes, but it's job security.

LIBRA

(September 23 to October 22) This will be a much easier day for you. You'll really enjoy working with others. You can be the coordinator. That's a job you do well. What you need are people who don't know how to get along with each other. Those are not as numerous today, but you'll find some.

SCORPIO

(October 23 to November 21) You have more freedom of movement this morning than later on. Your boss will be watching you like a hawk. You have to comply with his or her demands. You're an expert at feeding energy to another powerful person. Feed this one a few ideas, too.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21) This is a much easier day for you. Things will go very well without much effort on your part. Meanwhile, you are getting anxious to do something physically active. Bowling, anyone? The more, the merrier. Right after work, go do it!

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20) It's time to take better care of your own business. But where will you get the money? Don't worry, it's out there. Make contact with the person who has what you need early this morning. Reestablish your relationship and your friend will know you're a good risk.

AQUARIUS

(January 21 to February 19) Your natural mental powers are quite impressive. Your mind is working very quickly. That's good, because someone is dragging you into unfamiliar territory. There'll be no dozing off, that's for sure. This is going to be a very interesting day for you.

PISCES

(February 20 to March 20) You're going to have to actually get down to work. Provide what someone else requires, and do the job perfectly. Show you're not all talk and no action. You actually can produce the results the two of you have imagined together. No problem, right? Go for it!

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

A SEMI-FURNISHED VILLA FOR RENT

An exclusive villa located in Abdoun/Sweilieh area with an outdoor heated swimming pool, having complete privacy, ideal for an ambassador who likes to entertain and hold parties & receptions. The villa consists of the following:

Ground Floor:

1. Master Suite with a bedroom, bathroom, dressing lobby and a study/living room with a pool view.
2. Master bedroom with its private bath.
3. Large Saloons with French windows that overlook the covered terrace and the swimming pool.
4. Entrance Lobby, guest bath, two cloak rooms and a storage room.
5. Dining room with a garden view.
6. Large kitchen with a breakfast area.
7. Laundry room.
8. Maid's bedroom and bath.
9. A lobby with a bar and a sitting area.
10. A large covered terrace that overlooks the swimming pool.

First Floor:

1. Two bedrooms and a bathroom.
2. Lobby with a kitchenette and bar.
3. A large activity/living room with a fire place and a billiard table.
4. Two open terraces one overlooks the pool and the other overlooks the garden.

Basement:

1. Boiler room.
2. Filter room for the pool.
3. Closed storage room.
4. Storage area for garden furniture.
5. Guard room and bath.

Outside Area:

1. A heated outdoor swimming pool size 11x5.5 meters with complete privacy surrounded with ceramic tiled pool side area and trees, ideal for parties and receptions.
2. An outside bath and shower for the pool.
3. A covered garage for two cars side by side with an outside kitchenette and a storage room.
4. Open parking space for two cars.
5. A beautifully landscaped garden with a barbecue area.

Facilities:

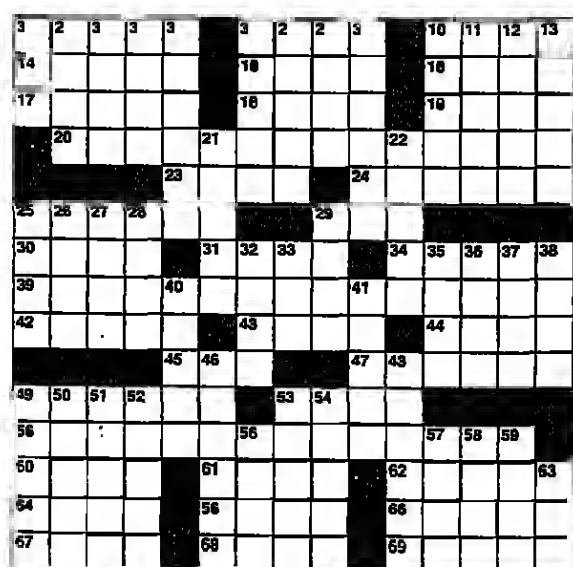
1. The whole house has under floor heating with insulated double walls and double glazed windows and French doors.
2. All bedrooms, study room and saloons have individual air conditioning split units.
3. A central burglar - alarm system.
4. Water storage with a capacity of 40 cubic meters.
5. A central T.V. Antenna and Satellite Dish.
6. Land area: 1455 square meters. Building area: 870 square meters.

For more details please call Telephone number 820175.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

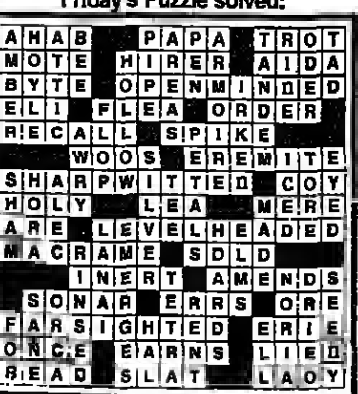
1. Recklessly
6. Powder base
10. Recline in the sunshine
14. See eye to eye
15. Wing-like
16. Distinctive style
17. Court procedure
18. Carbonated drink
19. Der — (Adenaur)
20. Favorite, in a way
23. Orient
24. Places on record
25. Spectator's area
29. Keats production
30. Emanation
31. Dutch cheese
34. Facetious tributes
38. Practically perfect
42. Identifying tag
43. Aesthetic pursuits
44. Evergreen feature
45. Footed vase
47. Pleasantly warm
48. TV street
53. City near Des Moines
55. Mythical fruit
60. Sailors' objective
61. Hurt
62. Staggering
64. Thought
65. Therefore
66. Taylor of TV
67. Carnive creature
68. do-well
69. Inclined plane



by Frank R. Jackson

09/27/97

Friday's Puzzle solved:



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09/27/97

DOWN

1. Wrestler's item
2. Taj Mahal location
3. Plumber's concern
4. Vault

ACROSS

5. Cried out
6. Fast food
7. On high
8. French composer
9. Rubbednecked
10. Wild animal
11. Parisian mall
12. Greek demigod
13. Lag joints
21. Atelet item
22. First month in Madrid
25. Go to sea
26. Albacore
27. Middle East native
28. Nucha
29. Leave out
32. VIP on campus
33. Mo.
35. Killer whale
36. Bustling affairs
37. Remitted
38. Low card
40. Ornamental feather
41. Sonelior Keltavuer
46. Uncover again
48. Actors' collectables
49. Flavorful
50. Lyric poem
51. Toot
52. Church structure
53. River in Italy
54. Unimportant
56. Get along
57. City on the Oka
58. Gambling mecca
59. Reconote
63. Shelter

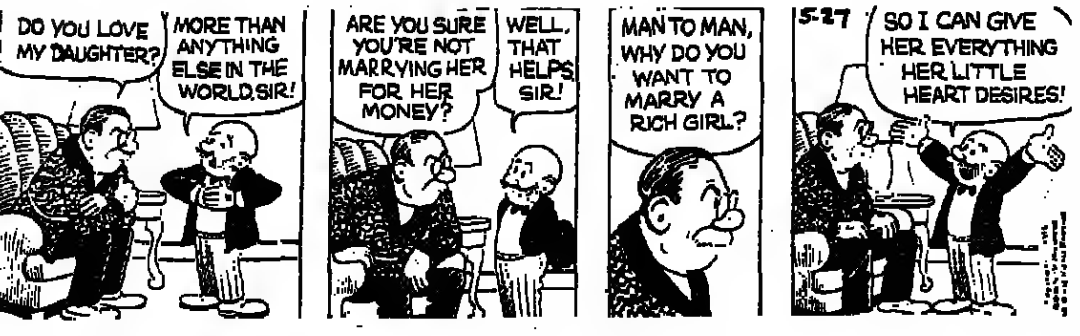
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

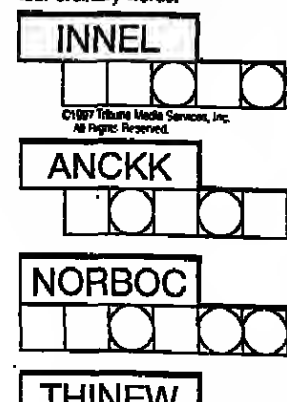
By Glasbergen



"On Fridays we're allowed to dress sloppy, burp as loud as we want, and use bad grammar on the phone."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: A

Saturday's

Jumbles: APRON MANGY FORMAL BEMCAN

Answer: The estate's butler impressed guests with this — HIS MANOR MANNER

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Arghiri



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

U.S. provides \$10m for water sector in Jordan

A U.S. government grant agreement providing \$10 million for water sector activities in Jordan was signed Tuesday at the Ministry of Planning by Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, minister of planning, on behalf of the government of Jordan, and by Janet Sanderson, deputy chief of mission, U.S. Embassy, Jordan, and Jonathan Addleton, acting director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Jordan, on behalf of the United States of America.

This \$10 million, along with the \$53.5 million provided earlier this year, will be used to develop and implement urgently needed water activities with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. Activities included are the design and the construction of improved wastewater facilities in the Jordan Valley, Aqaba and Greater Amman and the restructuring and rehabilitation of the Greater Amman water supply system. The funds provided this year will also help Jordan convey increased quantities of "peace water" through the Jordan Valley to population centres and to finance other mutually agreed upon, priority activities in the water sector.

Support for the Jordanian water sector activities is part of an on-going USAID initiative to improve the management of water resources in Jordan. With this grant, a total of \$104.5 million in grant fund has been provided since 1993 to improve the quality of wastewater effluent, increase water use efficiency and strengthen water sector institutions.

Tuesday's agreement brings total USAID assistance to Jordan for fiscal year 1997 to \$126 million, up from \$7.2 million in fiscal year 1996, making Jordan one of the top six recipients of USAID assistance worldwide.

British construction mission arrives Friday

NICK RAYNSFORD, MP, Britain's Minister for London and Construction, will arrive in Amman on Friday October 3 at the head of a trade mission of British businessmen representing Britain's Construction Industry. During his first visit to Amman, Mr. Raynsford and the delegation will meet with Munthir Haddadeen, Minister of Water and Irrigation; Bassam Saket, Minister of Transport and Telecommunication; and Nasser Lawzi, Minister for Public Works and Housing.

Mr. Raynsford and the delegation will also attend a joint presentation by the Arab Potash Company and the Jordan Dead Sea Industries Company on the future of chemical industries in Jordan; as well as a presentation by Nabil Mousab, chairman of Al Dawliya for Industrial, Trade and Tourism Investment, on hotel projects in the country. This is in addition to presentations by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Ministry of Transport on their projects.

Mr. Raynsford and the 16 mission members will also visit Aqaba where they will meet with Fawaz Khasawneh, president of the Aqaba Region Authority and attend a presentation on tourist and infrastructure development plans for the Aqaba region including plans for the Aqaba Free Zone area. They will also listen to a presentation by Zara Investments on Hotels and Tourist Development Projects.

The minister and the delegation will then visit Petra to meet with Dr. Kamel Mahadin, director general of Petra Region Planning Council, who will give them a presentation on Petra Region Planning Council's activities and projects.

Top business executive highlights threats to U.S. economic supremacy

CHICAGO (AFP) — Excessive environmental regulations, resurgent industrial strife and workers' insecurity could dent America's current economic supremacy, a top U.S. business executive said Wednesday.

Lawrence Bossidy, chairman of Allied Signal, told a business luncheon that the U.S. economy is "at the top of the heap again" thanks to a painful industrial restructuring that "restored" the ability of our companies to compete.

Yet Mr. Bossidy, dubbed the "most sought-after CEO (chief executive officer) in America" by Fortune 500 two years ago, warned that Europe and Japan would eventually solve their current problems and "will be back as a major economic

force."

"If Europe and Japan will be back, if China and India are emerging as global economic powers, where does that leave the United States? Things are good now, but what can we expect tomorrow?" he said.

A key threat was "the danger of a tilt toward mindless environmental regulations that ignore their consequences on the economic well-being of our people," he said, expressing "great misgivings" about an international treaty on global warming to be signed in Japan in December.

He also warned against the "recurrence of labour-management strife in the wake of the (megashopper) United Parcel Service strike."

He noted that rising government spending had been masked by higher tax receipts to balance the budget and said failure to rein in such spending could derail the economic expansion.

He cautioned against a retreat from international trade liberalisation agreements and expressed concern over employee motivation in the wake of "restructurings, diminished job security, increased workloads and escalating executive compensation."

AlliedSignal, a high-tech and manufacturing company based in New Jersey, sold \$14 billion worth of aerospace and automotive products, chemicals, fibers and advanced materials last year. It employs 70,000 people in 40 countries.

British Airways eyeing partial purchase of El Al

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Britain's transport minister, Gavin Strang, told Israeli officials that British Airways (BA) was interested in buying part of El Al when the Israeli state carrier comes up for privatisation, officials said Wednesday.

Mr. Strang revealed BA's interest in El Al during talks with Transportation Minister Yitzhak Levy and aviation officials, transportation ministry officials told AFP.

Israel has been trying to sell off El Al as part of a broad privatisation programme launched by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but has yet to

find any takers for the loss-making airline.

El Al is notably handicapped by a prohibition on flying during the Jewish Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

Orthodox groups in government, including Mr. Levy's right-wing National Religious Party, have sought legislation which would impose the Sabbath flight ban even after privatisation of El Al.

The Israeli airline has also been the target of several terrorist attacks, but has in response developed one of the tightest preventive security systems in the business.

Qatar Airways plans to go public in 2 years

MANAMA (R) — Qatar Airways plans to convert to a public company in two years by offering its shares to private investors, its chief executive said in remarks published Tuesday.

"We are a private company and we are in no need to issue our shares. But we will do so when Qatar Airways is converted to a public company which we hope will take place in two years from now," Akbar Al Bakker told the Arabic-language Al Hayat daily.

Mr. Bakker said the

airline — which is 70 per cent owned by the Qatar ruling family with the foreign minister as its chairman — would then offer its shares to the public.

He expected the number of passengers flying with Qatar Airways to more than double to 750,000 in the current financial year which started in April 1997 from 350,000 the previous year.

Mr. Bakker expected the number to reach 950,000 in the 1998/99 financial year.

Kuwait said moving to open up oil sector to foreigners

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait is moving closer towards opening up exploration and production in the oil sector to foreign companies, which are currently limited to providing technical advice, a newspaper has said.

"The Supreme Petroleum Council seriously intends to take decisive decisions about foreign participation in drilling for oil in Kuwaiti fields," Al Watan reported, quoting informed sources.

The council, which last met on July 30 headed by acting prime minister and foreign

minister, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, is assessing detailed government studies with action expected in October, the daily said.

But the daily did not say what kind of new agreement might be approved by the council that is charged with drawing up oil policy.

"I think (the role of foreign firms) was discussed by the council, but it has been discussed before," said one oil expert.

"I'm not sure if any decision has been taken," Foreign firms operating in

Kuwait — including British Petroleum, Chevron and the U.S. and France's Total — are limited to providing advice to state-owned Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) through technical service agreements, which only offers them a flat fee.

Analysts say the oil majors are hoping to gain more profitable arrangements that could include incentives if, for example, they succeed in boosting recoverable reserves through better technology or reservoir management.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ACAD	TL	NG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7748	0.6194	1.4598	120.75	1.3785	1738.30	1.9984	5.9615
DE Mark	0.5634	-	0.3488	0.8226	88.02	0.7784	979.38	1.1264	3.3595
GB Sterling	1.6144	2.8635	-	2.3561	194.72	2.2255	2805.94	3.2261	8.6218
CH Franc	0.6851	121.52	0.4240	-	82.67	0.9437	1190.10	136.89	4.0810
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4693	0.5126	1.2083	-	1.1410	14.39	165.48	4.9346
CA Dollar	0.7254	1.2699	0.4467	1.0477	1.14	-	1243.55	1.4306	4.2828
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0202	0.3559	0.8639	1441.96	0.7922	-	11.49	3.4261
NL Guilder	0.5004	88.74	0.3096	73.01	60.35	0.6892	969.18	-	2.9805
FR Franc	0.1677	0.2978	0.1038	24.4748	20.23	0.2311	33.52	33.5200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUN	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7050	3.7504	0.3770	3.6400	0.3042	3.6728	1538.00	3.3985
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2897	0.5317	5.1340	0.4291	5.1800	2188.43	4.7934
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	409.56	0.9062
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9483	-	9.68	0.8068	9.74	4074.38	9.0148
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0836	1.01	421.98	0.9337
Kuwait Dinar	3.2573	2.3307	12.3287	1.2393	11.97	-	12.07	5049.31	0.9337
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1931	1.0212	0.1028	0.9911	0.0828	-	418.23	0.9254
Lebanese 1000	0.65	0.4618	2.4417	0.2454	2.3688	0.1980	2.3910	-	2.2126
Egyptian	0.2942	0.2086	1.1035	0.1109	1.0711	0.0895	1.0807	451.96	-

Energy		
Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	20.34	19.84
WTI	21.10	21.26
Bonny	20.34	19.84
Dubai	18.50	18.75
UL Gas	191.00	190.00

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	336.4	338.8
Silver (oz's)	5.18	5.2
Platinum (oz's)	431	433
AL (3 Months)	1675	1676
CU (3 Months)	2110	2113
Zinc (3 Months)	1359	1360
Lead (3 Months)	647	648
NI (3 Months)	6925	6930

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ACAD	TL	NG	FRF
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4734	0.1652	0.3895	32.212	-	-	-	-
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4835	0.1887	0.3978	32.895	-	-	-	-
KW Dinar	3.2573	5.8377	2.0367	4.8031	397.14	-	-	-	-
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.7103	1.8434	3.8746	320.41	-	-	-	-
CY Pound	1.9074	3.3858	1.1813	2.7844	230.34	-	-	-	-

Currency Deposit Rates (Bld)									
Period	1	3	6	9	12	1	3	6	12
Crncy	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month
USD	5.58	5.65	5.71	5.80	5.83	-	-	-	-
GBP	7.09	7.12	7.37	7.46	7.37	-	-	-	-
JPY	0.41	0.43	0.45	0.46	0.44	-	-	-	-
DEM	3.12	3.31	3.37	3.56	3.66	-	-	-	-
FRF	3.22	3.32	3.43	3.57	3.64	-	-	-	-
CHF	1.28	1.44	1.58	1.69	1.78	-	-	-	-
ITL	6.78	6.57	6.35	6.01	5.82	-	-	-	-

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIKRISANI															
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179															
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 01/10/1997															
PAST 12 MONTHS		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE					
HIGH	LOW														
N	2.340	1.580	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	9.7	0.00	18	23900	46155	1.93	1.93	-				
	2.540	2.250	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	14.7	6.48	7	2100	5160	2.49	2.44	-0.05				
	5.200	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.7	3.84	4	611	3005	4.93	4.92	-0.01				
	1.050	0.740	JOR. CUP. BANK	15.1	8.24	12	8450	7149	5.85	5.85	-				
	4.050	3.520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.1	3.23	26	18791	69137	3.67	3.71	0.04				
	2.200	0.890	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITRA)	6	16.13	2	200	189	91	93	0.02				
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 241.39	CHANGE: -0.01	69	54052	130791
	2.170	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.2	8.20	20	10535	19032	1.80	1.83	0.03				
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 114.14	CHANGE: +0.16	20	10535	19032
	2.050	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.5	5.10	86	54772	107559	2.00	1.96	-0.04				
	3.780	1.320	19810 ELECTRICITY	22.0	3.11	3	150	548	3.71	3.70	-0.01				
	8.10	4.80	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	27.7	0.00	1	200	108	7.52	7.54	0.02				
	8.160	6.700	ALBAY	12.8	6.99	2	250	1788	7.15	7.15	-				
	1.760	1.150	MID. EAST HOTELS	19.5	0.00	4	9989	12729	1.25	1.28	0.03				
	3.720	2.890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.1	0.00	14	18110	63385	3.49	3.50	0.01				
	2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	8.6	6.08	35	12200	22191	1.78	1.81	0.03				
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 111.28	CHANGE: -0.11	145	95671	208306
	4.450	3.220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	25.6	2.89	9	719	2728	3.81	3.80	-0.01				
	11.040	9.070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	8.10	13	860	9453	10.97	10.98	0.01				
	3.160	1.620	INDUSTRIAL CORP. MGR.	9	0.00	71	350	578	1.65	1.63	-				
	4.700	3.400	ARAB FRUIT. IND.	12.7	4.35	18	6990	32106	4.60	4.60	-				
	5.950	4.300	QAR ALDAMA DV. INV.	14.5	4.24	6	2550	15083	5.90	5.90	-				
	8.870	4.50	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.0	0.00	46	51100	26653	5.3	5.32	0.01				
	1.240	0.850	ARAB PAPER CORP. TRD.	12.4	0.00	3	1000	1065	1.00	1.00	-				
	1.400	0.790	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	1	1700	1360	80	80	-				
	0.770	0.510	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	9	4450	2492	57	55	-0.02				
	1.200	0.510	INVERVED PAPER CHEM.	9	0.00	22	7750	5276	55	55	-				
	0.830	0.520	JOR. ROCKWELL INDS.	9	0.00	1	3800	2568	67	67	-0.01				
+	2.970	1.480	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	13.1	6.90	1	100	145	1.48	1.45	-0.03				
	0.890	0.530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	37	22900	15539	70	70	-0.04				
	1.310	0.700	KAWHER INVEST.	69.0	0.00	1	210	10	2.10	2.10	-				
	1.880	1.080	UNIV. MODN. INDS.	9	2.21	6	1000	1240	1.24	1.24	-				
	1.460	0.900	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	12.2	10.99	3	1250	1138	91	91	-				
	1.620	1.300	NATL. CHLORINE	14.5	4.55	12	16500	25023	1.57	1.54	-0.03				
	0.810	0.510	JOS. NEW CARB. CO.	34.4	6	4000	1450	85	84	-0.01					
	2.090	1.340	EL. KAY READER WEAR	53.5	0.00	2	15000	22800	1.52	1.52	-				
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 122.67	CHANGE: -0.09	198	142226	167923
GRAND TOTAL											INDEX: 176.14	CHANGE: -0.04	432	302484	526052
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 01/10/1997															
	0.710	0.430	MACH. EXP. MENT. MALIN.	9	0.00	3	750	395	51	53	0.02				
	0.630	0.300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	1050	326	32	31	-0.01				
	0.820	0.380	JOR. TRADE PACT.	12.8	0.00	74	688200	340151	48	48	-				
	0.660	0.760	UNIV. TRAC	16	0.00	16	7400	16224	77	77	-				
	0.570	0.360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	24	485000	194300	42	41	-0.01				
N	0.950	0.610	AL-QANILAR 751	73.9	0.00	1	1000	520	76	77	0.01				
	1.080	0.650	UNITED FOR FINAN. INV.	52.1	0.00	1	2000	2000	1.00	1.00	-				
	0.800	0.400	JOR. INDS. MACHS-VERCO	9	0.00	6	7500	1978	25	26	0.01				
	0.690	0.490	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	1	500	255	49	51	0.02				
	0.540	0.380	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	46.1	0.00	11	7566	3026	40	40	-				
	0.380	0.220	INDX. TEXTILE	1	0.00	1	100	100	100	100	-				
	0.750	0.400	NATL. MULT. ENG. NAMCO	9	0.00	7	3950	1659	42	42	-				
N	0.980	0.890	READY MIX CONCRETE	11.7	0.00	4	10000	9815	97	97	-				
	0.710	0.460	JORDAN STEEL	34.8	6.49	4	4900	3773	76	77	0.01				
	0.580	0.460	ARAB ELEC. INDS.	9	0.00	6	7500	1978	25	26	0.01				
	1.230	0.860	UNIV. TOBACCO 752	9	0.00	2	1250	1208	1.23	1.20	-0.03				
	0.720	0.550	RA21 FRAM. 852	9	0.00	1	100	52	65	67	0.02				
	0.520	0.290	INDS. ENG.	28	0.00	28	31400	9238	68	68	-0.02				
	0.860	0.670	INDS. CERAMIC	17.5	0.00	3	1400	928	67	67	-				
	0.520	0.210	1. TEXTILE MANUP.	9	0.00	1	200	50	24	25	0.01				
	0.470	0.760	PEARL SAN. & CHEM.	9	0.00	3	877	486	47	49	0.02				
N	1.000	0.690	NAT. ALUMINIUM. 751	97.4	0.00	4	6000	2700	70	70	-				
	1.020	0.720	ARAB INT. FOOD PACT.	42.4	0.00	4	46750	39355	84	88	0.04				
	0.840	0.580	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.8	15.87	4	1400	860	63	63	-				



Hlayyil Ramadan of the Royal Stables took second place in the junior male Middle East Championship at the start of the horse show of the Arabian Horse Festival (photo by Hatem Ali)

Arabian Horse Festival Jordanian entries impressive on first day of horse show

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arabian Horse Festival continued Wednesday with the start of the horse show and the opening of the photo exhibition at the Royal Stables at Hummar.

Jordanian entries were impressive coming in first place in 6 of the first 7 classes on the first day of the horse show which culminates Friday with the Middle East Championship.

Yamama of the Royal Stables won first place among Class 1 (yearling foals), Flaxman's Raya of Ja'far Stud was first in Class 2 (yearling fillies), Picoia of Ja'far Stud won in the Class 3 (fillies born in 1985), Bahiya of the UAE's Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan was first in Class 4 (fillies born in 1994); Hlayyil Ramadan of

the Royal Stables was first in Class 5 (yearling colts); Al Furat of the Royal Stables won Class 6 (colts born 1995); Kuhl Al Oyoun of Taleb Al Nahar Stud won Class 7 (colts born 1994).

In the Middle East Championship, Picoia of Ja'far Stud won first place in the Junior Female Category, while Al Furat of the Royal Stables won the Junior Male Category.

President of the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation (RJE) HRH Princess Alia opened the photo exhibition by Ebrahim Shalaby and Zohrab depicting the beauty of the purebred Arabian and featuring photos from the Jordanian landscape.

The four-day Arabian Horse Festival began Tuesday with horse races at the Royal Racing Club at Tunaib.

Six races were featured with prizes ranging from

\$10,000 for the flat race to \$18,000 for the other five sponsored by the United Arab Emirates Equestrian and Horse Racing Federation.

The day's biggest event, the 2,200-metre race was won by Taber of the Royal Stables.

This year's festival is one of the biggest ever with over 220 entries from six different countries: The UAE, Syria, Qatar, Palestine, the U.S. and Jordan.

The majority of entries are from Jordan, with all Jordanian stables breeding pure Arabians represented.

Judging the competition will be representatives from five different countries.

In addition to Jordan, judges came from Australia, France, Poland and the United Kingdom. They will be looking at type, head and neck, body and topline, legs and endurance.

Dressage Council of Jordan plans symposium for equestrians

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Dressage Council of Jordan in cooperation with the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation (RJE) will soon be having educational and training events.

Dressage is one of the fastest growing equestrian sports worldwide. However, since competitive dressage is just beginning in our region, a symposium on correct basic training, prerequisite to advanced riding will take place Oct. 18-20 in Amman as the first in a series of events aimed at trainers, riders, and judges.

The course will be conducted by Col. K. Albrecht von Ziegner of Mechttersen, Germany at the RJE headquarters at the Royal Stables, Al Hummar. Private lessons with Col. von Ziegner will also be available.

The sessions will be conducted with morning lectures, and mounted demonstrations in the afternoon.

The first day's programme will include rider's position, correct application of the aids, as well as lunging the young horse, and systematic training, "The Training Tree". The second day will include demonstrations of horses at various levels of training as well as continued discussion of the "Training tree".

Col. K. Albrecht von Ziegner is well known for his training methods from the German tradition, and has agreed to visit Jordan to share the concept of the German school with riders in the region. His equestrian career began in 1939, followed by posts in the University of Tübingen, NATO and later for four years as Chief Instructor at the Turkish Cavalry School in Istanbul. He has written a many articles on training, and has edited publications including "Deutsche Reitlehre" (Principles of Riding) and Museler's "Riding Logic". Recently, he published his own book "The

Basics." Registration for the symposium is now open. For more details contact the RJE, 841370, or the DCJ at 553-6886.

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Swiss slam small Russian goals

NYON (AFP) — Swiss club Sion have lodged a protest over their UEFA Cup defeat by Spartak Moscow because they claim the Russian goals were 14cm too low. A UEFA spokesman said even if the protest was upheld it did not necessarily mean Spartak would be disqualified. Tuesday's match finished 2-2 to allow Spartak to qualify 3-2 on aggregate.

Swim cheats may face early test

PERTH (AFP) — Swimmers taking part in the world championships here early next year may be drug tested as soon as they arrive in Perth, organisers said Wednesday. Championship organising committee chairman Tom Hoad said here that Australian swimming wanted a major proportion of swimmers to be tested as soon as they arrived. A meeting this week with the sport's world governing body, FINA, would determine whether the tough anti-drugs stance would be implemented, he said. "I believe it is important we show strong motivation to have a drug-free championship," he said. "Making it known testing is to take place before the championships could act as a big deterrent." More than 100 countries are expected to compete in the event at Challenge Stadium from January 8-18. Western Australian Sports Minister Norman Moore has pledged Government financial support in the war against drugs at the meeting — the biggest sporting event in Australia before the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Palace downed by lowly Hull

LONDON (AFP) — Hull, 91st in the English League, held on in extra-time to put Premiership Crystal Palace out of the League Cup at Selhurst Park on the away goals rule on Tuesday. Crystal Palace won 2-1 on the night but it was not enough to stop Mark Hateley's earning third division strugglers a third-round trip to Newcastle. The vital score belonged to a defender called Ian Wright, who rose unchallenged at the far post to head Richard Peacock's 28th-minute corner firmly past Kevin Miller. The goal meant Palace needed to score three times to survive, but goalkeeper Steve Wilson performed heroics in the Hull goal.

Vengeful Juninho sinks Leicester

LEICESTER (AFP) — Atletico Madrid's Juninho took his revenge on Leicester when he scored the goal which sent them tumbling out of the UEFA Cup in a dramatic first round, second leg clash at Filbert Street on Tuesday. The Brazilian star had been reduced to tears when he was a part of the Middlesbrough side defeated by Leicester in the League Cup final last season. But the 24-year-old star was all smiles after striking 18 minutes from time to end an heroic effort by Leicester, who eventually lost the tie 4-1 on aggregate with Francisco Kiko adding a second in the dying seconds. An often ill-tempered game saw Atletico defender Juan Lopez and Leicester midfielder Garry Parker both shown the red card early in the second period.

Burkina Faso get new coach

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — Frenchman Philippe Troussier was appointed Tuesday as Burkina Faso's national coach, the country's football federation announced here. Federation general secretary Robert Korahire said Troussier would take charge at least through to the end of next year's African Nations Cup, which Burkina Faso will host in February. Troussier previously coached Ivory Coast and Nigeria.



HRH Princess Haya steers her horse to clear an obstacle during a recent competition (file photo)

Princess Haya wins 3rd place in Siena Derby

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein won third place in the Italy's Siena Derby, 200 kilometres north of Rome.

Thirty professionals and Olympic medal holders took part in the 22 steeplechase event which is considered one of the toughest races in the world.

The 1200 metres race was attended by 15,000 spectators. Princess Haya's participation is considered the first of its kind in this type of race managing to overcome several obstacles which the Italian champion Giorgio Noti, holder of four European medals, could not conquer.

With this result, Princess Haya became the first Arab to win in a European equestrian event.

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East-West vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH	EAST
♠ J9	♠ 5
♥ A Q 4	♥ 8 3 2
♦ 8 4 2	♦ K Q 9
♣ A 9 4 3	♣ K Q 9 7 2

WEST: ♠ A Q 10 7 4 3 2, ♥ K 7 6, ♦ 10, ♣ 9 5

SOUTH: ♠ K 9 6, ♥ J 10 9 5, ♦ A 7 6 5, ♣ K J

The bidding: NORTH 1NT, EAST Pass, SOUTH 2NT, WEST Pass.

Opening lead: Six of ♠

There is an old bridge truisim which states that, if suit is good enough to bid, it is good enough to lead. Former Canadian Peter Nagy, now a Chicago resident, proved on this deal that the converse also holds true.

We do not know many Wests who, even at adverse vulnerability, would stay out of the auction. That would have given North-South the option of a lucrative penalty double.

When North-South arrived at three no trump Nagy decided that the suit was not good enough to lead either.

Instead, Nagy chose what turned out to be the safe lead of the six of hearts. Note that, with a spade lead, declarer has enough entries to collect one spade, four hearts, one diamond and three club tricks.

Declarer elected to finesse the queen of hearts at trick one and, when that won, went after diamonds by leading low from dummy and ducking in hand. West's ten won and the defender persevered with hearts, leading the king to South's ace. A diamond to the nine was allowed to hold, and East exited with a heart.

In dire straits, declarer tried a low spade toward the jack. West grabbed the queen, and found the only way to defeat the contract by exiting with a low club. That ensured three club tricks for declarer, but there was no way to unscramble them.

Declarer made a final stab by: leading another spade. West rose with the ace and shot back another club, and that was that. Declarer had already lost four tricks, and whether South chose to win on the table or in hand, there was no way to avoid another loser in a minor suit. Down one.

France won't rejoin NATO military before December

MAASTRICHT (AFP) — France will not return to NATO's military structure before the end of the year, the deadline for completion of an internal restructuring partly designed to give European allies a bigger role in the alliance.

French Defence Minister Alain Richard confirmed here Wednesday a judgement in July by President Jacques Chirac that NATO had not gone far enough in changing its command structures to give Europeans a greater role.

"Because of differences in opinion on the level of progress made in boosting the European presence in command structures ... we estimate that we will not be in a position to change our position before December," Mr. Richard told NATO defence ministers meeting here.

Although expected, the decision was a blow to efforts to create a European security pillar within NATO, which France itself had championed as a condition for its return after a 31-year absence.

As a major military

power, France's presence within the alliance's military structure would have added weight to NATO's European component.

Mr. Richard, however, said France would continue to participate fully in NATO, taking part in combined joint task forces, NATO planning with the Western European Union and in new NATO councils such as that with Russia.

A dispute with Washington over whether an American or a European officer should lead NATO's southern command halted the French return to alliance military structures it abandoned under President Charles De Gaulle in 1966.

But France's new Socialist government was not eager to embrace an initiative begun under a conservative government.

Neither Washington nor Paris budged in the year-long test of wills over AF South, as the southern command is known.

The Naples-based command is home of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and Washington argued that the command had to remain

under a U.S. admiral because it was pivotal to its interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

France insisted that since NATO's two top strategic command already went to U.S. officers, NATO regional commands like AF South should be held by Europeans.

U.S. officials say the issue has now been shelved and may not even be raised when U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen meets next week in Paris with Mr. Richard.

"Nobody wants to engage on it right now," Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said. "It was poisoning the relationship, and we want to build a new relationship."

France's demands were gravely undermined by its failure to win real backing from any of the other major European allies. German Defence Minister Volker Ruhe said Wednesday France would have a better chance of success if it attempted "to make its way from the inside."

Britain also urged France to swallow its pride and

return to the NATO fold.

France is a "key country and a key ally of ours," said Defence Secretary George Robertson. "We would want to encourage it to be a full member of the alliance as it once was."

With or without France, NATO hopes to reach agreement by December on changes in the command structure that would reduce the number NATO headquarters from 65 to about 23 and give Europeans a greater role than in the past.

"There is nothing in the new command structure that precludes France from coming in," said Walter Slocombe, U.S. undersecretary of defence.

"On the part of the United States and all the other allies we hope that with time the French government will decide that it does want to bring France back into the full integration with the alliance," he said.

Still, posts will be shared out once the new command structure is in place, which will complicate France's reentry at a later date, said U.S. ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter.



ODD OR EVEN? A policeman checks a motorcycle licence plate early Wednesday as anti-pollution measures were put into effect in Paris. Only cars and motorcycles with licence plates on which the first group of numbers ends in an odd number can drive within the city following record pollution levels in Paris (Reuters photo)

Jospin goes suit with new anti-pollution law

PARIS (AFP) — French Premier Lionel Jospin and four of his ministers drove electric cars to their weekly cabinet meeting at the Elysee Presidential Palace on Wednesday, amid a pollution clampdown in Paris.

As Paris commuters submitted to a government decree allowing only half of motorists on the roads to combat a pollution surge, Jospin turned up in a green Peugeot 106 powered by electricity.

Environment Minister Dominique Voynet, who ordered the snap anti-pollution measures, also drove green, as did Transport Minister Jean-Claude Gaysot, Education Minister Claude Allègre and Schools Minister Segolene Royal.

Brigitte Bardot 'shocked' after hunter shoots bear

PARIS (AFP) — Brigitte Bardot, the French animal rights activist and former film star, on Tuesday voiced her horror following the death of a bear that was shot by a hunter in southwestern France. In a statement, Bardot said she was "absolutely outraged and deeply shocked," following the death Saturday of the bear, known as Mellba.

Mellba, a Slovenian bear released in the Pyrenees in June 1996, was shot on Saturday in the Haute-Garonne region of France by a young hunter who was stalking a wild boar. The man said he felt threatened by the animal.

German court curbs canines

COLOGNE (AFP) — A court warned dog owners to muffle their mutts, setting heavy fines for those who fail to do so. Dogs are to be allowed to bark, but no more than 10 minutes at a time, and up to a maximum of a half-hour per day. Beyond that, their owners are liable to fines of up to \$280,000. The case came up when neighbours complained about Robby, a small Mastiff Hound that belongs to singer Erik Silvester. Robby apparently does not share his master's talent or repertoire, though plaintiffs said he holds his own when it comes to volume, projection and endurance.

Bill Wyman, 60, to be father again

LONDON (AFP) — Former Rolling Stones bass guitarist Bill Wyman, 60, announced Tuesday he was to be a father again and said "it's nice to know I am not shooting blanks yet."

"I'm quite proud that I'm still knocking them out," Wyman and his wife Suzanne, 38, have two daughters, Katie, aged three, and Jessie, two. He also has a 36-year-old son, Stephen, from a first marriage.

Spice Girls lend their charms to computer game

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's pop superstars, Spice Girls, are going hi-tech with the launch of the first interactive computer game named after them, it was announced Wednesday.

Players entering Spice World can mix their own versions of the supergroup's hits, choreograph animated versions of Posh, Ginger, Sporty, Scary and Baby Spice, and even interview them at an interactive video press conference.

Israel reviews whether to try or extradite Maryland suspect

TEL AVIV (AP) — In an about-face, Israel said Wednesday it would review its decision to try a teen-age suspect in a Maryland killing in Israel rather than extradite him to the U.S.

Bob Livingston, chairman of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, Tuesday had branded Israel's refusal to extradite 17-year-old suspect Samuel Sheinbein as an "outrage."

Mr. Livingston threatened to make the case a factor in continuing the \$3 billion in annual U.S. foreign aid to Israel.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said American officials are working on "how to sort this out."

"I think there's a real question as to whether the father is really an Israeli citizen, and this is clearly a crime committed in the United States," Ms. Albright said on NBC's "Today" show, without elaboration. "We're working with the Justice Department and I hope we'll be able to sort this out soon."

Stung by the criticism, Israel's justice ministry said Wednesday that "Israel is not a refuge for criminals."

Sheinbein, of Wheaton, Md., fled to Israel last week after allegedly murdering 19-year-old Alfredo Enrique Tello Jr., whose burned and dismembered body was found in wheat on Sept. 18. He and another teenager,

Aaron B. Needle, are charged with murder in Montgomery County Court.

Israel's justice ministry said Tuesday that under Israeli law, Sheinbein could not be returned to the U.S. The ministry said the suspect is considered an Israeli citizen — even though he never lived in Israel — because his father, Shlomo, 53, has Israeli citizenship.

However, the ministry said Wednesday it was reviewing whether Mr. Sheinbein was eligible for Israeli citizenship in the first place. Irit Cohn, head of the ministry's international department, said Mr. Sheinbein left Israel at age six in 1950, two years before the law on citizenship was passed.

"There are questions on whether he met the requirements of the law," Mr. Cohn told the Associated Press. She would not provide details, and said an answer was expected early next week.

If it turned out that Mr. Sheinbein was entitled to citizenship, then Israel would have no choice under existing law but to try his son in Israel, Mr. Cohn said.

Mr. Sheinbein's lawyer said the suspect might waive his right to be tried in Israel if he was offered a deal by Maryland prosecutors. "If Maryland comes to us with better conditions then we will consider it," the lawyer,

Nitzana Lietner, told the Associated Press.

But Ms. Lietner said that for the moment, Sheinbein was not fighting Israel's decision to prosecute him here. "The idea that he will be tried in Israel looks OK to us," she said.

Mr. Cohn said Wednesday she was not certain whether Israeli law would even permit Sheinbein to return voluntarily to the U.S. to stand trial there.

Meanwhile, Israeli police have begun investigating Mr. Sheinbein in preparation for a possible trial, the ministry said. On Sunday, two U.S. prosecutors and two police officers are expected to arrive in Israel to help Israeli police.

"The authorities in Israel are cooperating fully with their U.S. counterparts," the statement said.

Mr. Sheinbein's father, a lawyer and former Pentagon employee, has been charged in Israel with tampering with a police investigation by helping his son flee the U.S.

A brother, Robert, was also detained by Israeli police Monday, but both were released Tuesday on condition they remain in Israel, said police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin.

Mr. Sheinbein appeared Monday before a magistrate who ordered him held for 10 days so police can question him.

U.S. joint chiefs head retires with full pomp

FORT MYER, Va. (R) — The nation's highest ranking military officer, General John Shalikashvili, headed into retirement Tuesday with a full display of pomp and fulsome praise from his boss.

"Our nation is safer. Our armed forces are stronger, and our world is a better place because of your service," U.S. President Bill Clinton said at ceremonies to honour the 61-year-old general on his retirement as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff.

Jets and helicopters flew overhead, honour-guard soldiers trooped past in a crisp review, a fife and drum band played and four cannons fired 19 booming shots as part of the ceremonies on a manicured parade ground of the army's Fort Myer.

Gen. Shalikashvili, widely known as simply "Shali," was saluted both for his extraordinary life — in which he went from a childhood in Warsaw during the World War II to the position of America's top soldier — and for his role in reshaping the U.S. military strategy in the post cold war era.

Israel frees two Jewish extremists on New Year

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel released two Jewish extremists jailed for killing an Arab and reduced the sentences of four others Wednesday, hours after the government freed an Islamist leader, police officials said.

Zeev Wolf and Guershon Ershkowitz were pardoned by President Ezer Weizman on the eve of Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, the officials said.

The two were connected to the now outlawed anti-Arab movement Kach and were sentenced to 10 years in prison in July 1993 for killing a Palestinian in a grenade attack on a market in the Arab sector of Jerusalem's Old City.

Those benefiting from reduced prison terms included Yoram Skolnik, whose life sentence for executing a bound Palestinian

who stabbed an Israeli settler in 1992 was cut to 15 years.

Two other Jewish extremists, Nir Ephroni and Eli Vanunu, who were convicted of murdering a Palestinian gas station attendant in 1984 in retaliation for the killing by Palestinians of an Israeli soldier, had their sentences reduced respectively from 22 to 15 years and from 22 to 20 years, the officials said.

A fourth man, Nahsbon Wolf, jailed four years ago for killing a pregnant Palestinian woman driving by the West Bank Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba, had his term cut from 15 to 12 years.

Israel Radio quoted a spokesman for Mr. Weizman as saying the pardons were not related to the release before dawn

Wednesday of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

The spokesman, Arie Shummar, said the pardons were decided three months ago and were carried out to mark the Jewish New Year.

But observers saw the timing as an apparent gesture to calm possible right-wing anger over the release of Sheikh Yassin, who was jailed for life in 1991 for complicity in the kidnapping and killing of two Israeli soldiers by Hamas militants.

The government said Sheikh Yassin, 61, was freed after more than eight years in prison due to his failing health and a request for his release from His Majesty King Hussein (See story on page 1).

Farrakhan will not apologise to Jews over his convictions

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Nation of Islam Leader Louis Farrakhan said he wants dialogue with the Jews to "come to grips with our differences," but he refuses to get on his knees and apologise for any offensive remarks.

"I don't have to bow down or beg. I'm not your enemy," Mr. Farrakhan told a press conference after giving a speech at the African-American Protestant Church here Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, it is desired that I come on bended knee. Those in the Jewish community feel that I need to atone for telling the truth — I cannot," he said.

The 64-year-old African-American Muslim leader has headed the Nation of Islam since 1977. His speeches can include harsh language — he once called Judaism a "gutter" religion.

Mr. Farrakhan said he was "concerned" that U.S. President Bill Clinton's talks with Israeli leaders over new Jewish settlements on Palestinian territory could be seen as appeasement.

He drew parallels with British Prime Minister

Neville Chamberlain's 1938 attempt to appease Adolf Hitler to end Nazi expansion in Europe.

"If America does not use her tremendous leverage properly," Mr. Farrakhan said, "that area [the Middle East] could break into war that would engulf the whole earth."

Surrounded by a dozen of his bow-tied security guards, Mr. Farrakhan said: "If I'm not telling the truth, then the Jewish community has a responsibility to show me where I am in error."

"But to demand of me an apology when I think I am absolutely right, then I don't have anything to apologise for," he added.

Perhaps, Mr. Farrakhan told the Jewish community, "you see me as one of your recalcitrant slaves and you want to bring me in line so that the rest of the slaves won't get courage to stand up."

U.S. government restrictions bar Mr. Farrakhan from collecting a one billion dollar gift offered to him by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

"Mr. Ted Turner just recently gave a gift of a billion dollars to the United

Nations for humanitarian purposes," he said referring to the billionaire CNN owner. "That is all that Mr. Qadhafi wants."

The members of the U.S. government, he said, "fear that we're going to spend it on arms or munitions, which is silly. We're not trying to destroy the country where we live."

Although Mr. Farrakhan said he would not atone to Jews for any remarks, he has been asking African-Americans to support a nationwide "Day of Atonement" on October 16 — his proposed day of fasting and prayer with no work or recreation.

Among those listening to Mr. Farrakhan's two-hour speech were U.S. football legend O.J. Simpson, who earlier this year was found liable in civil court for the 1994 stabbing deaths of his ex-wife and her male friend, despite his acquittal in 1995 on related murder charges.

Mr. Farrakhan said he was glad to see Simpson among the crowd, adding that the civil verdict's "stench" tarnished his image. Simpson left the church as reporters arrived.

6 civilians slain; AIS rebels hold fire in Algeria

PARIS (R) — Algerian newspapers said Wednesday gunmen killed six civilians, including two 70-year-old men, as troops widened a siege on a radical rebel stronghold.

News of the latest killings came hours after rebels of the relatively moderate Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) began a ceasefire they say will expose a rival militant group who they accuse of "extreme barbarity" against civilians.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan Tuesday condemned recent massacres in Algeria as "heinous murders" that were totally unjustifiable.

Liberte newspaper said Wednesday that gunmen, thought to be members of the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA), killed six civilians Monday night in the Sidi Merzouk area, in the southwestern province of Saïda, where government troops have killed 40 rebels in a week-long offensive.

One of the victims was bound hand and foot, tied to a gas cylinder and burnt alive, it said, adding that two 70-year-old men were among the dead.

La Tribune newspaper said

troops encircling a GIA elite unit in Ouled Allet town, south of Algiers, had extended their siege to the neighbouring area of Chebli, where more than 100 villagers had been slaughtered in a series of massacres since last April.

Ouled Allet was abandoned by its 12,000 residents in 1994 when GIA men moved in and told them to get out or be killed.

The AIS truce is widely seen as a litmus test for the group and its political wing, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), in making a cohesive approach to the government and assessing its ability to isolate extremists and wipe out members of the rival GIA.

Analysts said it was impossible to gauge the impact of the truce in the short term.

The AIS has always said its war was with government troops and security forces and not with civilians. At the same time, the authorities have muzzled any reports of casualties among their troops, so any relief of pressure on the government forces resulting from the ceasefire is impossible to assess.

Algerian officials and media have seldom men-

tioned the AIS, pinning most of the blame on the GIA for the massacres of thousands of civilians since last November.

The GIA appeared to revel in its notoriety, saying its killings would go on.

Algeria's authorities have publicly denied any dialogue with the rebels they used to brand as "criminals and mercenaries" insisting that the outlawed FIS is a chapter from the past.

The Algerian Foreign Ministry Tuesday denied a story in the London-based Al Hayat newspaper that an "Arab country" had mediated in reaching the ceasefire.

The FIS was the leading opposition force in Algeria but was prevented from winning parliamentary elections when the authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election it had dominated.

Violence erupted shortly afterwards, with members of the security forces as the initial targets.

Despite the authorities' denial of any dealings with the AIS or FIS, analysts doubt the ceasefire could have been achieved without some political involvement.

The truce was announced

two and half months after the authorities set free FIS leader, Abassi Madani, midway through his 12-year jail term for undermining state security.

AIS chief, Madani Mezrag, in a statement he issued a week ago, ordered his men to lay down their weapons Wednesday "to foil the plans of those who are waiting for the opportunity to harm Algeria."

The AIS now appears to be joining from the battlefield, the FIS and other politicians who believe that dialogue is the only way to end Algeria's strife, in which more than 60,000 people have died since 1992.

The fear in Algeria now is that hardliners on both sides may try to sink the ceasefire by fanning the violence to undermine those who still cling to a possible political compromise.

But many Algerians, turned into hostages of the strife, hope the ceasefire will at least open the door to cooperation between rebels and the army to crush the GIA through a combination of military strikes and political marginalisation.